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THE

LIFE AND WORKS

OF

ALBERT DÜRER.



PORTRAIT OF DÜRER, BY HIMSELF, AT THE AGE OF THIRTEEN.

(*From the Silver-point Drawing in the Albertina at Vienna, done in* 1484.)

FRONTISPIECE, VOL. I. (*See p.* 58.)

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ALBERT DÜRER

His Life and Works.

By MORIZ THAUSING,

PROFESSOR IN THE UNIVERSITY OF VIENNA, AND KEEPER OF THE ALBERTINA COLLECTION.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN.

EDITED BY FRED. A. EATON, M.A. Oxon.,

SECRETARY OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY.

IN TWO VOLUMES.—Vol. I.

WITH PORTRAITS AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

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EDITOR'S PREFACE TO THE TRANSLATION.



O exhaustive and critical account of the life and works of Albert Dürer has hitherto been placed before the English reading public. The works of Mr. W. B. Scott and Mrs. Heaton, the latter of whom has lately published a second edition of her book, afford, indeed, useful and popular summaries of the results attained by German research, but do not pretend to examine the career of the great artist from an independent point of view, or to add anything to the student's knowledge of the subject.

Germany, as was only natural, has always taken the lead in rescuing from oblivion or obscurity all that could throw light on the life and career of one of her greatest sons, and in assigning to him his high and well-deserved position among the most famous masters of pictorial art. Notwithstanding, however, all that had been done by various students and writers, among whom should be especially mentioned Herr A. von Eye, who published his important work, *Leben A. Dürers*, in 1860, it was reserved for Dr. Thausing to treat the subject in such a manner as practically to leave little more to be said about it, either in respect of fact or theory. Endowed with the "God-given diligence" of his hero, Dr. Thausing, whose position of Keeper of the Albertina at Vienna afforded him exceptional opportunities for the

task, has not only carefully examined the valuable collection of Dürer's works immediately under his care, but also those contained in every known public and private collection, comparing and analysing them with profound care, and with the acutest critical insight, assigning to each its chronological order, its value as a work of art, and the meaning which its author intended it to express. He has further collated every existing original document bearing upon the history of Dürer, his family, his native place, his friends and companions, and his immediate contemporaries. The topography of Nuremberg, its political position in Germany, its constitution and government, its commercial and artistic importance, and the life of its citizens, are all brought vividly before us; while nothing can be more interesting than the account of Dürer's own family, especially that part of it which treats of his relations with his wife, and absolves her from the commonly received imputation of having been an avaricious termagant. No less important in their bearings on the question of Dürer's artistic career, are the chapters on Michel Wolgemut and Jacopo dei Barbari. But perhaps one of the most striking characteristics of Dr. Thausing's work is the way in which Dürer's own personality is realised. The man and the artist lives before us not only in his works, his pictures, drawings, engravings, woodcuts, &c.; but in his letters and journals, of which Dr. Thausing had made a special study * before the publication of the present book.

In addition to his own minute and exhaustive labours, Dr. Thausing has made full use of the results attained by others who have studied the same subject. To these he

* *Dürers Briefe, Tagebücher und Reime, nebst einem Anhange von Zuschriften an und für Dürer, übersetzt und mit Einleitung, Anmerkungen, Personenverzeichniss und einer Reisecarte versehen*, Vienna, 1872.

makes due acknowledgment in the Preface to the German edition, mentioning especially the names of Waagen, Albert von Zahn, and Otto Mündler. Of these, the first two died before the notes they had collected were published, but in each case their papers were made over to Dr. Thausing, von Zahn's by his family, and Waagen's by his literary executor, Alfred Woltmann. Herr Mündler, finding that he had no leisure to make use of his materials, determined shortly before his death to place them, to use his own words, unreservedly in Dr. Thausing's vigorous hands. The fact that such confidence should have been reposed in him shows the reputation enjoyed by Dr. Thausing among German art critics. France, too, notwithstanding that several of her distinguished writers have occupied themselves with Dürer, notably M. Emile Galichon, M. Charles Blanc, M. Georges Duplessis, and others, has marked her sense of the merits and completeness of Dr. Thausing's work by publishing an admirable translation of it.

No apology, therefore, is necessary for presenting in an English garb this remarkable contribution to the history and literature of art. Though the number of Dürer's genuine oil paintings in England may be counted on the fingers of one hand—indeed few exist anywhere out of Germany—the British Museum contains a large and valuable collection of his drawings, while nowhere are his engravings and woodcuts more known and esteemed than in this country. We have every hope then that Dr. Thausing's life-like presentment of the great master of the German school, his sympathetic appreciation of the moral and intellectual grandeur of the man, and his critical estimate of the work of the artist, will meet with a ready welcome. With the exception of a few unimportant additions and corrections made by the author himself, the book is precisely what it was when originally published in German. Nothing has since come to light to

induce the author to alter or modify any statements or opinions contained in it. He writes but a very short time ago, "*das Thatsächliche in meinem Buche über Dürer steht überall noch heute aufrecht.*" And, as we consider that in a translation of this kind it is the author alone who should speak, we have carefully abstained from adding any notes by way of comment or criticism.* The object has been to carefully follow the text, preserving, as far as possible, the spirit and special characteristics of the original, even to the extent of sometimes retaining modes of expression peculiarly German, whenever it seemed in any way possible that the author's meaning might suffer or not be quite accurately conveyed by a freer and more idiomatic rendering.

The task has been by no means an easy one. Apart from the abstruse and often involved style peculiar to much of German literature, which seems to address itself exclusively *ad clerum*, the great number of technical terms that necessarily occur in a work of this description presented unusual difficulties. To give a list of all those who have assisted in the attempt to surmount them would be unnecessary, but the editor feels bound to express his grateful acknowledgments to Mrs. E. Howley Palmer and Miss M. E. von Glehn, who have been his principal colleagues in the laborious work of translation. For the solution of many a doubtful point and the correct meaning of many a technical word or phrase, his best thanks are due to Dr. Jean Paul Richter, whose kind assistance has been invaluable. Mr. William Mitchell, whom Dr. Thausing speaks of in

* In the case, however, of works which have passed into other hands since the appearance of the original edition, the change of proprietorship has been noted, and the names of the new owners given. The two principal collections to which this remark refers are the Hausmann Collection, which now belongs to Dr. Blasius, and the former Posonyi Collection, which has been sold by M. Hulot to the Berlin Museum.

his Preface as thoroughly versed in all matters connected with Dürer and his art, acting as the author's friend, and so to say his representative, has been kind enough to read through the proof-sheets of the translation, and make some very valuable suggestions and amendments.

All the illustrations contained in the German edition, including the initial letters and tail-pieces, have been inserted, and a few others added. Especial care has been taken to render the Index worthy of so important a work. In addition to the General Index, a special one has been prepared in which, under separate headings, will be found lists of all Dürer's pictures, water-colours, drawings, engravings, woodcuts, writings, and miscellaneous productions described or referred to in the course of the following pages.

It only remains to express the earnest hope that we may have succeeded in doing justice to Dr. Thausing, and in furnishing English readers with a correct and faithful transcript of his interesting and erudite work.

FRED. A. EATON.

January, 1882.

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LIFE OF ALBERT DÜRER.

CHAPTER I.

THE EARLY GERMAN SCHOOLS OF PAINTING AND ENGRAVING.

"The arts very easily become extinct, but their recovery is a work of time and labour."—DÜRER.



ISTINCTLY a modern art, painting is indebted for everything which has contributed to develop it and render it the richest of all the arts—abundance of ideas, great technical facilities, extensive scientific knowledge, and moral aspirations—to the genius and intelligence of comparatively recent times. Earlier ages did, it is true, contain the elements of modern civilisation, and we find there the first attempts and foreshadowings of pictorial representation. But antiquity was too entirely under the dominion of plastic forms to allow of a higher development of painting; and the overpowering influence of classical sculpture extended far into that antechamber of modern times which we commonly call the middle ages. What chiefly, however, characterises the middle ages is its architecture. In the early or Romanesque period, the grand, sober forms, not altogether untrue to the traditions of the past, are still adhered to.

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But the victory of the papacy over the empire allowed the ecclesiastical idealism of the North to assert itself with such freedom that, loosed from the fetters of nature and moderation, it followed the impulses of an emotional excitement even into impossibilities. Gothic architecture, which developed itself in Northern France, was not so much the expression of the varied mediæval popular life as the reflection of a definite hierarchical conception of the world, never fully carried out. While the Romanesque style had recognised the independent value of sculpture and mural painting, Gothic architecture degraded those sister arts to the rank of mere ornament.

Meanwhile the great movement by which Rome, first through political and then through ecclesiastical agencies, united the nations of the West in a common and progressive system of civilisation had become an accomplished fact. The scattered germs had taken root in all directions. By gradual and universal organisation, nations, provinces, cities, individuals, began to enjoy a distinct and independent method of life and civilisation. While the tectonic arts still kept to the old beaten track, the mind of the people, in its search after individuality, devoted itself especially to the various forms of pictorial delineation, and laboured to release mural and miniature painting from their Gothic fetters. In the shape of easel pictures, engravings, and woodcuts, German painting separated itself from architecture, and from literature, which was subject to similar laws, and thenceforth put itself at the head of a new art.

In its earliest beginnings, so far as we can trace them, German painting, especially miniature painting, was employed upon primitive Christian forms, derived from antiquity. The figures are more or less imperfectly drawn, with hard outlines, and betray both in the attitudes and the draperies traditions of the antique, and a decided taste for plastic art, though

without any true or deep expression. For a long time these imperfections characterised all pictorial productions, no matter in what part of Germany they were executed. It was only after the middle of the fourteenth century, when such rapid and decisive progress had been made in the methods of technical procedure, that provincial distinctions asserted themselves in the national art, and that the first German schools of painting were formed.

Within these schools, for a whole century longer, each individual artist was still entirely subordinate to the same principles; his work is identified with that of his associates, and is only to be distinguished from the rest by its greater or less degree of technical power, not by its character. It was only a hundred years later that distinctive peculiarities began to assert themselves. Then special tendencies and feelings, as well as definite ideas of form, became gradually marked; and more and more the artist awoke to the fact that he possessed the strength to receive and spread the thoughts and feelings by which his age was stirred. It is only at this stage, when his life and works gain a more universal importance, and become the embodiment of the whole mind of the nation, that the study and appreciation of an individual artist is either possible, useful, or necessary.

German painting was still somewhat removed from this subjective conception of its duty when it threw off its alliance with architecture in the course of the fourteenth century. The painting of that early period bore distinct marks of its origin, and on this account has been designated as Gothic; an appellation, however, which was only justified in so far as it denoted a tendency of feeling on the part of painters to the abstract Gothic ideas of form in general. There are many reasons indeed why it should not be so called. One is the fact that, while painting developed itself and became more perfect by striving after a closer

imitation of nature, the same effort made by Gothic, in the tectonic arts, caused its decline; thereby showing that the two depended on totally different conditions for success. Besides, German painting, once independent, followed several essentially different directions. Yet the peculiar contrasts exhibited in these older schools are owing not so much to the already distinctly marked characteristics of different nationalities as to the under-current of those mighty ideas which governed the whole German people throughout the middle ages.

The exalted ideal of the mediæval church found its consummate expression in the old Cologne school of painting. The slender and gracefully sinuous forms that seem trying to raise themselves upwards, the long, thick folds of the falling draperies, the soft, composed countenances, the gentle look which appears as if absorbed in inward contemplation rather than turned to outward things—the whole steeped in bright transparent colours, and filled in with a rich gold ground—these are not children of this world, they belong to that better land the desire for which is to be awakened by gazing upon them, and the possession of which is to be gained by revering them. They do not seek to withdraw us from a cheerful enjoyment of the present, but to maintain it in constant relation to the heavenly life, and to keep us in the one path of emulation in suffering and of powerful intercession, namely, the path of the Church. This character, in its fundamental features, is, properly speaking, common to the early period of all German painting; but it was only on the Middle Rhine that the conditions favourable to the production of a higher and more refined class of works were found together. In the rich and holy city of Cologne, the German Rome, art was protected by an ecclesiastical elector, encouraged by an opulent clergy, and cherished by a burgher class as pious as they were fond of

pleasure. The school that flourished there has, from the number of fine works it produced, been justly called the Cologne school, though the epithet has been improperly extended over a much larger field. Individual artists, such as the famous Wilhelm, can only be dimly and uncertainly distinguished from the rest of the school; and although we know that the painters were laymen, their works are almost always of a sacred character, and display an unaffected piety, a contemplative fervour, and a glowing rapture, which no imagination has ever since attained. As these representations are very much akin to the ideals of the mediæval church, they still remain under the immediate action of hierarchical influences.

The Cologne school did not even renounce its characteristic feature of devotional piety when, in the first half of the fifteenth century, a keener appreciation of nature gradually began to gain ground. Hand in hand with this novelty came the progress and perfection of the technical methods of painting; and the richer the material means, the less did artists resist the temptation of using them for their own ideal objects. The figures become shorter and fuller in shape, the eyes more life-like, the male saints, especially, stand more firmly on their feet, and the countenances sometimes even show too strongly-marked an individuality. At the same time there is the same bending attitude of devotion, especially in the women, with their delicate hands and their charming rounded, child-like faces, which enchant us by a truly angelic look of innocence. The chief figures always appear as supernatural beings, but the colder point of view from which the artist now regards them has made him think it necessary to adorn them with everything that gives dignity and splendour on earth. They wear the gay and, to us, often singular costumes of the upper classes of the day, resplendent with velvet and

silk, gold brocade and jewels. In default of any expression of deep earnestness and thoughtfulness, these accessories are very advantageous, for the splendid colours of the draperies lend even to inferior compositions that solemnity which cannot be dispensed with in a sacred picture. This later Cologne school culminated in the painter of the Cathedral, Master Stephan Loehner. With him, however, the strictly ecclesiastical and idealistic art of the middle ages reached the extreme limit, beyond which it was incapable of further development without becoming altogether false to its rigid principles.

In contrast to the Cologne school, there began to develop itself in the fourteenth century another German school of painting, that of Prague. Though the west of the empire was almost entirely divided into a number of ecclesiastical appanages which exhausted its strength, and at the same time made it a centre for clerical influence in Germany, and though the Rhine had become a veritable "*Pfaffengasse*"—"Parsons' Lane," the east still offered to the emperors compact territories, whence they could derive support for their power and authority. Irrespectively of the warlike Marches out of which the two great German powers were in time to grow, this held good especially of Bohemia; and it soon became a proverb in the empire that the imperial crown must be placed on the regal crown of Bohemia. Therefore, when Charles IV. of Luxemburg, a learned prince of artistic tastes, for the first time united both crowns in his own person, and attempted to create a fitting metropolis as a centre for Germany, painting not only found a national home in Bohemia, but was at the same time stamped with the leading characteristics of that state and country.

In no other part of the empire were the clergy so dependent upon the sovereign as in the kingdom of Bohemia, the adopted child of the German state. For though its

twofold population were distinguished by a strong leaning to personal piety, their religious feelings were not solely directed by an overpowering priestly influence to the thoughts of a better world, but were rather of an earnest, sometimes even gloomy, tendency, and sought their realisation in the circumstances of daily life. The emperor Charles, as might be expected from the position he occupied, brought various influences to bear upon painting at his court, witness the names of Thomas of Modena and Nicolas Wurmser of Strassburg. Byzantine influences appear also to have been at work. But notwithstanding this the Bohemian school preserved the uniform and local character which can be traced back to Dietrich of Prague and Master Kunze. The figures, mostly thick-set and sometimes larger than life, are dignified and earnest; the faces and hands are vigorously moulded; the draperies fall in wide-spreading pliant folds round the more freely moving limbs; the colouring is deep, toned down by grey shadows and broken up in the draperies, so that its real charm does not have full play. The eyes are wide open, and have a fixed, sometimes almost stern look. The accessories are true to nature. In spite of the diapered gold ground upon which they stand out, the grandeur of their appearance does not consist so much in their connection with a higher world as with the present and with the spectator himself, from whom they claim not only veneration but submission and obedience. In this Prague school of painting, more than in any other on German soil, lay the seeds of great monumental art. Created and patronised by Charles IV., it received involuntarily the stamp of the other great power which, with the Church, ruled mediæval Germany, and became, in fact, the school of painting of the Empire.

Between these two poles of German art-development in the east and west lay the imperial city of Nuremberg,

which, alone among all the others, can show similar efforts in the field of painting as early as the fourteenth century. As at Cologne and Prague, the elements of its early development originated in its native soil. The similarity of the forms in the oldest Nuremberg paintings—as, for instance, the altar-piece of the Church of St. James—to those of the Cologne school is perhaps due to certain principles common to all old German painting. But the wide-spread intercourse of the rising merchant city, with its love of building and monuments, led necessarily to manifold points of contact with other towns; it would therefore naturally come under the influence of the artistic movements both in the east and west. Nuremberg was, moreover, the favourite city of Charles IV., and it was from the Luxemburg emperors that it received the most powerful support and encouragement. It is therefore easy to suppose that it maintained intimate relations with the court of Prague. As early as 1310 we find mentioned in the penal register of Nuremberg the name "Cunzel the Bohemian, brother of Nicolas, the painter." The identity of these men with the masters of the Prague school of the same name cannot, it is true, be proved.* But however this may be, the great differences which exist in the oldest specimens of painting still preserved in Nuremberg point to opposing foreign influences, and so far as any idea can be formed of the general character of the early school there, its peculiarities lay midway between the Cologne and Prague schools. The figures display soft but thick-set forms and forcible modelling; the countenances have a child-like expression and widely opened eyes, generally brown. The drawing is accurate, the colours very pronounced but dark, and, in the flesh,

* See Murr, *Journal zur Kunstgeschichte*, xv. 25: "Cunzel bohemus frater Nicolai pictoris sententiavit se a civitate perpetuo sub pena suspendii."

as in the other parts, the half-tints and shadows are grey; the gold ground is diapered. It is less easy here than even at Cologne or Prague to name any particular masters.

The intermediate position of this third German school of the fourteenth century might indeed be explained by the central situation of Nuremberg. But, added to the differences already pointed out in its works, there is the fact that the most remarkable among them belong to a far later date than their style would lead us to suppose. There is authentic evidence which shows beyond a doubt that the celebrated Imhoff altar-piece in the gallery of the Church of St. Lawrence, and also the Virgin and Child there, done for the same family, are not earlier than the second quarter of the fifteenth century.* If, further, we compare the votive picture of the Coronation of the Virgin by Christ † with the same subject in the Pirna *Antependium*,‡ and in the prayer-book of the Abbess Cunigunde,§ both belonging to the Bohemian school of the fourteenth century, we shall find that there is a typical and archæological relationship which extends even to the colouring.

Considering their later date, it no longer appears surprising that these masterpieces of the old Nuremberg school display "greater knowledge of and attention to the pro-

* To be accurate, between 1418 and 1430. The founder, Conrad Imhoff II. (died 1449), appears on the wings of the votive picture in company with three women. By his side is Elisabeth Schäflin (married 1418, died 1430). In the year 1431 Conrad married for the fourth time, Clara Volkamerin, who died in 1439, and does not appear in the picture. Therefore it must have been painted between the third and fourth marriages. (Communicated by Baron G. von Imhoff from documents preserved in the archives.) Compare the genealogical tree of the Imhoffs in the charge of the keeper of the Chapel of St. Roch at Nuremberg.

† Copied in the *Sammler für Kunst und Malerei*, part i. p. 82. See, too, Otte, *Kunstarchäologie*, 3rd ed. p. 198; von Retberg, *Nürnbergs Kunstleben*, p. 49; and Waagen, *Handbuch*, i. p. 63.

‡ Published by Jak. Falke, in the *Zeitschrift für bild. Kunst*, iv. p. 280.

§ Reproduced in the *Mittheilungen der k. k. Central-Commission in Wien*, v. p. 82.

portions of the human body than those of the old Cologne and Bohemian schools." But painters who, after the lapse of several decades, still adhered freely to the forms of the old style cannot be looked upon otherwise than as dependents of those schools. Henceforth art followed in its progress the fortunes of the German people, and with them was subjected to the changes which affected the very centre of the national life, when the imperial power gradually began to pass away, the authority of the church to be undermined, and the burgher class to acquire more and more an independent importance. The schools of Cologne and Prague represented the highest perfection in painting of which the mediæval idealistic tendencies were capable. As the people became more and more occupied with earthly things, every step in advance led necessarily to a closer observation of natural objects and to a preponderance of realistic treatment hitherto surrounded by difficulties. The germs of this may already be perceived in the accessories and draperies of the school of Master Stephan. Before, however, these efforts to imitate nature had been able to undermine and weaken the principles of the Cologne school, it succumbed beneath the overpowering influence of the style, also realistic, and suited to the taste of the day, of the brothers van Eyck and their pupils. The Prague school, on the contrary, ceased to grow when the sun of imperial favour no longer shone upon it, but continued to live for a time in miniatures. Unable, however, in this branch of painting to retain the grandeur of its conceptions, it sank to representing trivialities, and reproducing the occurrences of daily life;* and the Hussite

* The German Bible of King Wenceslas, in the Imperial Library at Vienna, is a proof of this. Compare Waagen, *Kunstdenkmäler in Wien*, ii. p. 28.

troubles, which rendered any peaceful occupation impossible, put an end to it altogether.

A very different fate awaited the Nuremberg school. Here art, more secure than in the priestly or the regal city, took root in the inner life and sentiment of a healthy, powerful, self-reliant burgher community. While the German nobles had sunk into a barbarous, uncivilised condition, from which the peasantry had never yet been raised, the imperial cities had grown up into well-ordered, busy, and rich communities, ready to enter upon the inheritance of the middle ages. In them alone could scope be found for any new development of civilisation. Since the Interregnum they had been gradually acquiring more and more independence. Laws of their own making provided for order and industry within. Alliances with each other secured freedom and the protection of commerce without, when the empire could no longer guarantee such safety. Extensive commercial relations at the same time enlarged the burgher's range of knowledge, and procured him those riches which are the necessary foundation of a higher civilisation. Whilst in Italy the whole people, sovereignties as well as republics, with Rome and her great pontiffs at their head, turned towards the new ideas of the day, and whilst in France the strong, monarchical power undertook their direction, in Germany and in the Netherlands, at that time bound together by policy as well as nationality, their cultivation rested entirely with the burgher class. And, truly, it was a proud burgher class, such as no other nation in the world could easily show. While the German state threatened to crumble away, the imperial cities maintained in the nation the sentiment of unity and guarded its intellectual possessions. Their alliance with one another made up in a measure for the inadequate state organisation, and procured fitting respect for the

German name even beyond the limits of the empire. The Hanse towns, especially in the days of their glory, from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century, occupied a commanding position in the North of Europe, thanks to the guilds they had established from the *Stahlhof* in London to the *St. Petershof* in Great Novgorod. The kings of Denmark, Sweden, and England bowed down to their chief, the burgomaster of Lübeck.

The most important agency of the Hanse towns was at Bruges, in Flanders. Bruges was the great emporium where all the produce of the North and the South came to the market; it was, so to say, the high school of commerce in general. The word *Hansa* itself is Flemish, and signifies a tax or duty. Wealthy Flanders took also an active part in the cultivation of the arts, and Bruges may be called the cradle of modern painting, which, thanks to the demand for miniatures for illustrated books, a much-sought-after luxury, found there ample opportunities for developing itself, and for getting at all the secrets of technical procedure. Under Hubert van Eyck, in the beginning of the fifteenth century, painting attained to a degree of truthfulness to nature such as the world had never before seen. The genius of the Flemish master surpassed at one leap the performances of the painters of Prague, Nuremberg, and Cologne in the fourteenth century, whose works all bore evidence of the particular school to which they belonged. The effect of van Eyck's method was everywhere overpowering. It rapidly made its way up the Rhine to Upper Germany, instilling fresh life everywhere, and forming new centres in Cologne, Colmar, Augsburg, Ulm, and Nuremberg. While the various schools still retained their individual characteristics, German art as a whole received the stamp of Flemish influence in the fifteenth century.

The importance of van Eyck's innovation consists chiefly

in two things: the introduction of landscape into pictures, and the development of individuality of form and expression in the human countenance. The more correct treatment of the accessory parts and of the costume of the day are of secondary importance, because they are not supported by a better comprehension of anatomy and a just appreciation of the entire human body. The art of composition is, therefore, still almost entirely disregarded, and does not advance beyond the old simple arrangement. The artist's attention is more taken up by details; with him painting is purely epic, and only becomes dramatic in the Alsatian school of Colmar, with a great master like Martin Schongauer. We know how in antique art Greek sculpture at its first awakening began by modelling the naked human body in different attitudes expressive of action without making any alteration in the treatment of the features, which still had the same vacant look and the same awkward stereotyped smile. The tendency of modern art is a directly opposite one. Here painting begins with the study of the human countenance: it occupies itself not only with the form, but with the expression of the face. Only gradually does it attempt to render the movement of the draped figure, and model with accuracy the hands and feet, while it is long ere it masters the naked body. This development occupied almost a whole century. But Vasari is wrong when he states that Jan Mabuse was the first Flemish—by which he means German—painter who drew the naked human body. We shall see that, apart from Jan van Eyck, the Nuremberg masters had already much earlier, before the end of the fifteenth century, successfully ventured to represent nude figures in movement, and had done so independently, and not, like Mabuse, in direct imitation of the Italians. In short, modern art did not spring up on an empty soil, but among the ruins of the middle ages; it

was not built up from below, like antique art, but worked out, so to speak, from above.

The middle ages had intensified immensely the life of the human soul. By close intercourse with abstract ideas, by indulgence in fanciful creations, and by the study of all kinds of opinions, the mind became accustomed to a certain independent activity. To give expression in every possible way, by noble forms, to this inner world, which was preferred to the external one, became the great object. Hence at first those contorted forms which seem to be struggling to throw off their outward shape, and those widely opened eyes which gaze at us with feverish eagerness. From these eyes to giving expression to the whole face was but a single step, though certainly a difficult one. It was taken by the van Eycks. They were the first to reveal the soul of man in his countenance, and to find that soul reflected in nature. It was thus that the two constituent elements of modern art were placed within the reach of all. The correctness of this assertion, so far as landscape is concerned, needs no demonstration. Dürer and Altdorfer, by their method of treatment, made a further advance, and the Dutch of the seventeenth century brought landscape painting to its highest point of perfection. It is thoroughly and entirely a modern production, and continues to satisfy an æsthetic need. The other important element in the art of the present day consists in the expression of the countenance. Modern art may have done much towards the representation of the human body, but, with a few single exceptions, has never come near to the perfection of the antique; and these exceptions have never been, and never will be, understood by the world in general. Few among us have any clear idea of the proportion of the human limbs, of the capability of expression in their movements, and of the physiognomical significance of the whole body. How, then,

can an artist succeed in communicating with us in an unintelligible language? It is a great disadvantage to art, and a sensible want in our training. Yet we cannot deny, but must freely admit, that we measure our admiration of a picture too exclusively by our opinion of the heads in it.

Nuremberg was to Upper Germany what Bruges was to the Netherlands. Painting developed itself there in a wonderful way amongst the German burgher class. Far from declining under the influence of the new ideas, its austere but vigorous school embraced all the various currents, and turned them to its own uses. As formerly it had asserted its independence of the Cologne and Prague schools, so now it preserved its originality in spite of the numberless influences brought abundantly to bear upon it, from the Rhine, from Bruges and Ghent, and, later, from North Italy, and even from antiquity. Susceptible as it was of foreign impressions, it never sank into empty imitation, but rather drew its strength from a close adherence to nature, and from all which then stirred the exuberant life of the nation. Without being strictly ecclesiastical, it was deeply religious, and, without renouncing the truth, it remained elevated and full of warm feeling. It did not certainly attain to purely formal beauty according to modern ideas, or did so only conditionally, for it aimed higher. German genius is not satisfied with mere external charms if it cannot bring them into harmony with the aspect of the inner life. The idealism of German painting consists in this struggle to give material expression to deep and mysterious inward feelings. It shows itself in the schools of van Eyck and Cologne, and even in Martin Schongauer, by a certain air of suffering resignation, while with Dürer and Holbein it appears joined to independence of thought and a full appreciation of human nature.

The new tendencies were supported by a new technical method of design which the necessities of the case had developed in German painting: a technical method which sought to represent the whole substance, as well as the mere outline, by lines. While the old Florentines and also Leonardo and Mantegna produced their shadows by means of short, oblique, parallel strokes, the Germans shaded with curved and undulating lines. They were driven to invent this method, which the Italians immediately took up, by the small space allotted in buildings to mural painting, and, comparatively speaking, even to easel pictures. The greatest masters, therefore, preferred to devote themselves to engraving on copper and wood; whence it happens that specimens of the monumental art of Germany must be sought for in examples of the new method, which, it must be remembered, was not yet solely devoted to mere copying.* Linear drawing led to a clearer and more decided manner of treating form. By relinquishing the charm of colour, painting no doubt lost what might be called its musical faculty of touching the general intelligence; but this was compensated for by the introduction of more distinct and matured ideas into the composition. In this way painting raised itself to the rank of poetry, and gave eloquent expression not only to the moods but also to the thoughts of the day.

In proportion as the characteristic spirit of the middle ages passed away, art and literature descended to the burgher and peasant classes of the people. In common with strictly ecclesiastical architecture, the national epic, which borrowed its subject-matter from the misty distance, and could only satisfy the credulous with its tales of

* Compare A. Springer, on ancient German wood and copper engraving, in his work, *Bilder aus der neueren Kunstgeschichte*, pp. 171–206; and A. v. Zahn, *Dürers Kunstlehre*, p. 36.

adventure, had exhausted itself. The German people were tired of imaginary views of a better past or future, and in the comparative peace and seclusion of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries they returned to themselves and to the present. The sense of sight now asserted itself; people began to look about them in their own homes, in the church and the state, at their dress and their manners. The subject began to be its own object, and it is significant that the title of mirror was given to popular books, as, for instance, *Sachsenspiegel* ("Saxony's Mirror"), *Gnadenspiegel* ("Grace's Mirror"), *Eulenspiegel* ("Owls' Mirror"). As literature addressed itself more and more to a people eager to see rather than, as in former times, to hear, the promotion of pictorial activity quite independent of church influence became a necessity. People enjoyed adorning their houses, their furniture, and their books with picturesque representations, which exercised an influence on a circle outside that to which literature was accessible. As early as the thirteenth century, Thomasin von Zerklere said that pictures were for the peasant who could not understand writing, and in the *Narrenschiff* ("Ship of Fools") it is said:—"He who despises writing, or cannot read it, can see himself in pictures, and find therein who he is, whom he resembles, and what is wanting in him." *

The more literature descended into the burgher and peasant class, the more illustrations became of importance in books. In a people, too, who were so infinitely divided, and so deficient in any centralisation, there arose a keen desire for intercommunication, which soon grew into an

* Gervinus, *Geschichte der Nationalliteratur*, ii. Compare Geiler von Kaisersberg, *Speculum fatuorum*, published by Zarncke, in his edition of Brant's *Narrenschiff*, 251 *b*: "Ecce enim lingua nostra vernacula theutonica . . . conscriptum est, depictum quoque imaginibus pro his qui literas legere non noverunt."

unconquerable mania for publishing. This led to the invention of wood engraving, the rapid progress of which in the fifteenth century was thus hastened by the intimate needs of the nation. In the *Ars moriendi*, the *Armenbibeln* ("Bibles of the Poor"), the *Speculum humanae salvationis*, and others, the text shrinks to nothing, to give place to the figures; and merely for want of any better way of distinguishing these, mottoes are attached to their mouths. The printing of books with movable letters was developed out of these early block-books, and so by a roundabout way popular pictorial illustration supplied literature with the most important medium of its activity. After the external separation of illustration and text from one another, they both entered upon an unfettered career by means of the press. A formidable rival, however, to the woodcut grew up in copper engraving, the capabilities of which for printing were first tried in the Rhine district, in the middle of the fifteenth century, and which allowed of an incomparably more delicate execution of the subject. Yet, far from losing ground, wood engraving gained by the introduction of the richer art of copper engraving, for it was restricted to its own natural means, and within those limits attained perfection just at the time when, at the bidding of the same hands, the copperplate yielded results until then quite unheard of and for a long time unsurpassed.

Both these branches of art occupy a prominent position in the development of German painting; and its history cannot be rightly understood unless adequate attention is bestowed upon wood and copper engraving, for, from the conjuncture of events in Germany, it happened that these two pictorial arts came to the front exactly at a decisive moment. Painting proper was subject to totally different conditions on this side of the Alps from those it met with in Italy. The aversion to flat surfaces in Gothic

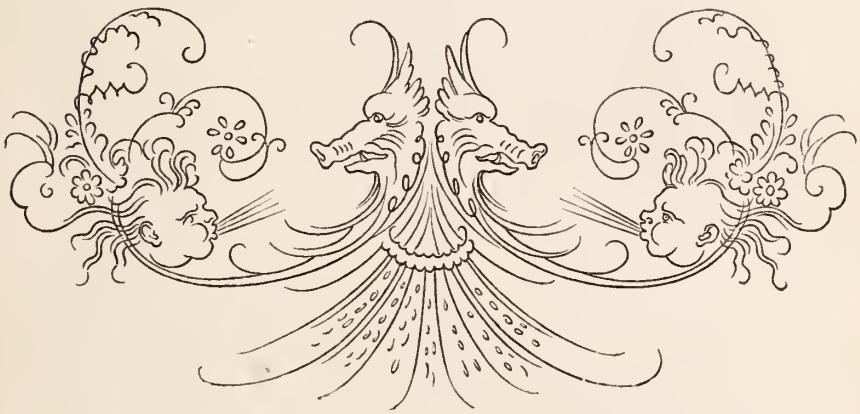
architecture, the confined areas of secular buildings, and the absence in them of open porticos, excluded mural painting from the inside walls, while the unfavourable climate made external frescoes impossible. The splendid colours of the stained windows threw even altar-pieces into the shade, and the severer ecclesiastical spirit of the North did not allow such free play of the imagination to sacred painting as it enjoyed in the South. The paintings, mostly memorials of personal piety, had continually to repeat the same saintly types, and the well-known groups which became, to the spectator, by the introduction of the donors,—not represented as taking part in the action, but merely in calm adoration—pictures within the picture. Portrait painting, it is true, grew out of these votive pictures, but of grander themes German painting of the fifteenth century was utterly devoid. It was not fostered by people of rank and authority, and questions of art did not enter into the concerns of public life. But individual minds, especially amongst the burgher and peasant classes, felt a deep æsthetic need. The Mæcenas which German painting had to satisfy was the people.

Labouring for a great impersonal public contributed materially to raise the artisan into the artist. By appealing to it he could relieve himself from any pressure which might be put on him by his employer. The painter could venture to follow out his own inspirations in his designs for engravings on copper and wood, sure that a congenial people would understand them. The fact that he usually was at the same time his own printer and publisher must also have been favourable to his worldly prosperity. For the security of the property thus created he placed a mark or monogram upon his work, and a well-regulated community, such as Nuremberg, watched carefully over the inviolability of these rights. The monogram at first was

only intended to indicate that the author had an exclusive right of sale. It was the modern conception of personality, the thirst for fame characteristic of the Renaissance, which added to this meaning the idea of an intellectual property. The German masters, therefore, employed their whole energies in utilising to the utmost the metal plate and wooden block, which permitted of their works being multiplied and spread abroad indefinitely. As large surfaces were denied them on which to display their powers, they indemnified themselves by producing effects on large numbers instead. Engraving in Germany by no means came after painting proper, but stood on an equal footing with it, and indeed often supplied its place. The woodcut was substituted for mural painting, and the copperplate for the easel picture. In fact, in the absence of a centre of civilisation, publicity gave the arts of design, at the time when the art of book-printing began to flourish, a certain monumental importance, so that, when the taste changed they rather led than followed the other arts, and were in no way dependent on or subordinate to them. Thus it was possible for so excellent an art-school as that of the master E. S. of 1466 to make progress without having had, as it would seem, any previous practice in painting; and Martin Schongauer, of Colmar, the first South German painter of importance who belonged to this school, appears almost solely as an engraver.

In complete independence, then, of the powers in church and state, and in harmony with that popular spirit which was pressing forwards and struggling to break loose from its ancient fetters, wood and copper engraving bore their first fruits in Germany. Through these two branches of art, the aspirations of the day first found expression and took shape; and it was where these aspirations were the strongest, viz., in Franconia, more especially at Nuremberg that the

popular arts of design naturally took their highest flight. The consideration of these circumstances can alone lead us to a just appreciation of our subject. For if we were to set aside the prominent position held by the woodcut and the copper engraving in German painting of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, we should find no key by which to explain the true importance of Nuremberg, and Dürer's place in the history of art.



CHAPTER II.

NUREMBERG.

"For the deep love and affection that I have borne to that venerable city, my fatherland."—DÜRER.

THE spot where Nuremberg arose is remarkable neither for its favourable position nor for being the site of an early colony, as is the case with a number of towns in Southern and Western Germany. No attempt at cultivation had yet been made on the banks of the Pegnitz when the Franconian emperors erected a castle on a rocky height above them. Its name is first mentioned in 1050, in the reign of Henry III., the most high and mighty emperor of Germany and Rome. The establishment of a market, the miracles attributed to the remains of St. Sebald, who was interred here, the frequent visits paid by kings, and the patronage they bestowed, continually attracted fresh comers, who settled between the castle and the river. And thus, near the royal castle which Conrad III. and Frederick Barbarossa often inhabited a new town sprang up under the rule of the house of Hohenstaufen. It was entirely dependent for its resources on the restless activity of the burghers; for Frederick II. says, in the important charter of the year 1219, that it is in consideration of its possessing neither vineyards nor shipping, and of its being situated on very

sterile soil, that he has determined not only to secure to his beloved city its hereditary rights, but also to increase them.

The unfruitful and sandy country round the city was no hindrance, but rather a spur, to the development of its powers. The blessings of freedom and justice which had been secured to Nuremberg in the days of the old imperial splendour produced fruitful results in the new city, and enabled the citizens, under their own royal magistrate, to free themselves from all dependence on the burgraves of Nuremberg. Already in the thirteenth century the charge of the imperial castle (*Reichsburg auf der Vesten*) had been given over to them, and the town gradually acquired all the prerogatives, partly through purchase, partly through imperial grant, which had been given to others in the same county and immediate neighbourhood; so that, towards the middle of the fifteenth century, it enjoyed complete self-government. In return for this, Nuremberg maintained an inviolable fidelity to the emperor and the empire.

According to the constitution of the commonalty, as it had developed itself during the fourteenth century, the government of the town was vested in a patriciate of noble families, the origin of which was probably derived from the knights of the burgraves. In the confusion following the death of Lewis of Bavaria, the guilds at Nuremberg, as elsewhere, made an effort to subvert the government, but the new king, Charles IV., quickly re-established the old council, and punished the leaders of the insurrection.* It is a striking evidence of the wise moderation of the ruling class that we find, towards the end of the fourteenth century, artisans not only in the council, but occasionally sitting by the side of the highest dignitaries, the *Losunger*.

* G. W. K. Lochner, *Geschichte der Reichsstadt Nürnberg zur Zeit Karls IV.*, 1347–1378; Berlin, 1873.

Their share in the government, it is true, soon sank to a merely honorary one, as the oligarchy gradually closed its ranks, and resisted any interference on the part of those who did not belong to its order.

At the head of the republic stood the first and second *Losunger*, who had charge of the treasury and the administration of the finances. These, together with the military commandant of the town (*Kriegshauptmann*), were the three principal authorities (*Obristhauptleute*). They were chosen from among the seven senior nobles (*Eltere Herrn*), and these again from the thirteen senior burgomasters, who, together with the thirteen junior burgomasters, had the conduct of affairs. Two of these burgomasters, one from each class, exercised the functions of the so-called *Frager* (remembrancers); and these *Frager* were changed every month. The whole six-and-twenty burgomasters, with eight senior elected deputies (*Alte Genannte*) and eight artisans as representatives of the guilds, formed the "Little Council" of forty-two members, in whom all executive power was vested. To this council was subordinate the "Great Council" of deputies (*Genannte*), chosen from amongst the whole community; but the latter was only called together on rare occasions to deliberate and take final resolve. The eight artisans in the Little Council also took a share in its deliberations, but it was merely a formal one. They could only be chosen from the guilds of the butchers, bakers, curriers, smiths, tailors, furriers, clothiers, and brewers; and the first and most considerable among them assisted the Losunger in the assessment of taxes, and in rendering a yearly account of the expenditure to the seven senior nobles. His functions remained thus restricted even after the industrial arts had attained to a position of much greater importance.

Christoph Scheurl therefore was correct when he wrote

to Johann Staupitz in 1516:—"The whole government of our city and the interests of all classes are in the hands of certain families, that is to say, of certain people whose ancestors have long had the management of affairs and ruled over us." * And Alvise Mocenigo, in concluding his account of his sojourn at the court of Charles V., in 1548, says that Nuremberg, in contradistinction to all the other towns of the empire, is governed by noble families, of whom there are not more than twenty-eight; and he adds, "This town has the reputation of governing itself better than any other in Germany, wherefore it is often called the German Venice." This, in the mouth of a Venetian statesman, is the highest possible praise.† Like the Venetian nobles, the patricians of Nuremberg followed that principle which alone can give lasting security to the power of a ruling class, the principle of severity towards themselves and clemency towards the governed. It might well cause a sensation throughout the whole world when, in 1469, Nicolas Muffel, head of one of the principal families, honoured by the pope and emperor, at the time first Losunger and the most eminent man in the council, was accused of robbing the public treasury of the town, and, after a short trial, hung upon the gallows as a common malefactor.‡

* *Die Kroniken der fränk. Städte*, Nuremberg, i. and v. 791.

† *Fontes Rerum Austriacarum, Diplomataria*, xxx. 69 et seq. As early as 1506, Christoph Scheurl writes: "Unde etiam civitati magnae accedunt divitiae, et tantum apud Germanos nomen: quantum Venetiis apud Italos. Unde etiam Venetia Teutonica cognominata est."—*Libellus de Laudibus Germaniae.* We learn from the same source that there was a proverb at Venice, to the effect, that "all the cities of Germany are blind, but Nuremberg is one-eyed" ("Germaniae civitates ceeas esse: Norimbergam vero monoculam")—words repeated by Ulrich von Hutten in a letter to Pirkheimer in 1518.

‡ See the history of the trial, in the *Chroniken der fränk. Städte*, Nuremberg, v. 753 et seq. The letter of justification which the council thought it necessary to send to the Holy Roman See states, *inter alia*, "nostri majores instituerunt judices, ut par et æqua foret inter omnes dispensatio justiciæ, quæ magis quid actum sit, quam quis egerit, inspiciat."—Ibid. 771.

And in 1496, when Helena Nützlin was murdered by her husband—the only instance of a murder amongst the patricians—the council emphatically rejected the mediation of the emperor in favour of the murderer, though murder and violence among the common people were very leniently treated. Leonhard Groland having dared, contrary to the manners and customs of the day, to carry on a love affair with Catherine, daughter of Hans Harsdörffer, and the secret correspondence having been discovered, he was arrested and sentenced to two months' imprisonment and five years' banishment from the city and neighbourhood of Nuremberg. The council even declared that it would not enter into the question of an eventual marriage between the two, though they belonged to the same class of society.* The first men of the republic expiated every transgression at once with imprisonment, as Wilibald Pirkheimer, for instance, learnt to his cost, as well as his old and powerful opponent, Anton Tetzel, who, though he had been first Losunger since the year 1507, was thrown into prison in the autumn of 1514, and died there after the lapse of four years, without his crime, which was probably a betrayal of state secrets, ever being known.

On the other hand, the patricians exercised their power over the people with singular wisdom and forbearance. They understood, not only how to be good masters, but how to appear as such. By allowing the artisans a share, though a very insignificant one, in the government of the city, they raised the tone and the public spirit of the burghers, and prevented serious disturbances and revolutions. The very jealousy with which the patricians watched over their own political rights exercised a favourable influence upon the progress and development of art and industry in Nuremberg.

* G. W. K. Lochner, *Eine Neigungsheirath*, in the *Jahresbericht des hist. Vereins für Mittelfranken*, 1863.

If the council endeavoured to weaken the influence of the ancient guilds, still less did it encourage any attempt at forming new ones. Every kind of combination or organisation within the branches of art-industry was more especially resisted. This may have originated in the idea that the more cultivated craftsmen would, if united in a body, make their influence more easily felt in the conduct of affairs. But the absence of regulations and restraint was of priceless value for the progress of art, and the evident results of this policy might well confirm the council in adhering to it. In Nuremberg, therefore, unlike other imperial cities, painting remained a "free art"; not quite in the sense of being a "liberal art," but as a craft untrammelled by any special rules. For instance, when an executioner once took to painting, and the other painters complained of his thus bringing their profession into discredit, the man was not only not forbidden to paint, but was given full liberty to do so; "for painting," said the court in giving judgment, "is a free art." The joiners were also for a long time in the same position; and their petition for a governing body and code of laws, after being repeatedly refused, was only granted in 1529–30. Later, indeed, a good many of these so-called "free arts" had procured or received constitutions; but until Dürer's time the council were jealously careful to prevent anything like a guild from being either established in Nuremberg or introduced there from outside.*

At the same time, the council was intent upon the wellbeing of the burghers, meeting every reasonable wish halfway. It was one of the first to establish a regular police, and to insure safety of person and property to everyone. Innumerable careful regulations were made for securing the cleanliness of the town, wholesome

* From a letter communicated by Herr G. W. K. Lochner.

food, trustworthy apothecaries, and also a proper care of the poor. Industry was encouraged in every way. The admission of strangers into the community was rendered very easy, all that was required being a recommendation from two citizens and a trifling sum of money; and the rights thus acquired could be as easily given up. In consequence of this, the working population rapidly increased. The last additions to the town were made in the time of the emperors Charles IV. and Wenceslas, when the outlying suburbs were united to it and enclosed with walls and ditches. Inside these arose churches and convents, religious houses and hospitals, public and private buildings, which, in the middle of the fifteenth century, excited the admiration of the refined and learned Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini, afterwards Pope Pius II., and testified to the wellbeing of the citizens, as well as their enterprise and artistic skill.

Simultaneously with the development of the constitution was carried on the building of the two chief churches—the older, St. Sebald, on the right bank of the Pegnitz, and the more recent, St. Lawrence, on the left; whence the two halves of the town are called respectively "St. Sebald's side" and "St. Lawrence's side." Both churches were completed just when Nuremberg reached its culminating period of glory, towards the end of the fifteenth century. They bear the evidences of their gradual growth. In the simplicity of their general plan and the adherence in them to certain local peculiarities, such as the spacious portals and the Romanesque style of the towers, they are the tokens of a tenacious national force and an unbending self-confidence. The Church of Our Lady (*Frauenkirche*), a half secular Gothic building of noble proportions, is, on the other hand, quite uniform in character. It was founded in 1355, by Charles IV., on the site of the Jewish synagogue, and consecrated in his presence in 1361. As it was intended to serve for political purposes,

as well as an imperial chapel, it was also called Our Lady's Hall (*Unserer lieben Frauen Saal*). The introduction of certain details of French Gothic is probably due to the Luxemburg emperor. Every part of the stonework, both the ornaments and the numerous figures, is most delicately carved. The figures themselves are slight, but not contorted, with great individuality and variety in the heads, whilst the hands and limbs betray an observation of nature which, for that time, is very surprising. These statues, executed by unknown, perhaps foreign, masters, must have exercised a great influence on the further development of art in Nuremberg. That they did so is shown by the choir of St. Sebald with the celebrated *Brautthüre* (Bride's Door) built between 1361 and 1377.

In the Frauenkirche the gradually declining empire left to its most faithful city a legacy which bore rich fruits in the artistic industry of the citizens. The first evidence of their gratitude is undoubtedly the famous *Schöne Brunnen* (Beautiful Fountain) in the Herrenmarkt, opposite the Frauenkirche, executed between 1385 and 1396 by Heinrich Beheim.* Among the statues which adorn this splendid pyramidal structure, that of Charlemagne is represented with the features of Charles IV., the first German emperor whose portrait has been handed down to us by the art of his native land, for Charles IV. loved art as he loved Nuremberg. His sons also, of whom Wenceslas, the eldest, was born at Nuremberg, and baptised with great pomp in St. Sebald's, continued to patronise the town in many ways. In 1424, Sigismund brought the crown insignia and the imperial relics to Nuremberg, and entrusted them to the keeping of the citizens. As long as the Roman Empire continued in the hands of the German nation, the vaults of

* From the name, perhaps a Bohemian. Compare the excellent monograph by R. Bergau, *Der schöne Brunnen zu Nürnberg*, Berlin, 1871.

the Hospital Church of the Holy Ghost held these treasures which every year, after Easter, were exposed with great solemnity by the council on a stage erected in the market-place, opposite the Frauenkirche, for the purpose of being adored by the people. This privilege, which Nuremberg enjoyed until 1804, contributed to increase the importance of the town in the eyes of foreigners as well as the citizens' good opinion of themselves. Nuremberg, therefore, appeared destined to be what it soon afterwards actually became in every respect, the most important of all the German towns.

In the fifteenth century Nuremberg was the centre of the whole trade of Europe. The sea passage to India had not yet been discovered, and all merchandise passed through it from Venice, in order to reach the Hanse towns and the northern countries of Europe. It was also the natural emporium of all the products of German industry, which were conveyed to the needy eastern peoples of Poland and Hungary. The riches which in return flowed from all countries into the hands of the merchant princes at once became reproductive in manifold prosperous industries. The love of work was common to all classes in Nuremberg, and the prosperity which sprang from it at the same time furnished leisure for more elevated and refined pursuits, the fruits of which became increasingly the objects of a noble ambition. It was this love of work which led the burghers of Nuremberg to appreciate rightly the highest earthly possessions, the artisans to practise art, and the rich upper classes to cultivate science. Not amidst storm and strife, as in Florence and ancient Athens, but in peaceful, well-ordered union, this German community of not more than a hundred thousand souls strove to attain the highest perfection in both these branches of knowledge. The external fame and importance of the republic kept pace with its internal progress. Undisputed queen of all the

cities of Germany, not only neighbouring communities, but bishops and princes, sought her friendship, and her mediation in their quarrels. Nuremberg, consequently, made the impression of a metropolis upon Johannes Butzbach, of Miltenberg, when, about 1470, he, then a young scholar, travelling with the rough student who tyrannised over him, saw its towers and battlements from afar.*

Their active and constant share in public affairs, the world-wide commercial relations they kept up, and the frequent journeys these involved, had done much to enlarge the intellectual horizon of the Nuremberg patricians; while their constant intercourse in the fifteenth century with Venice must have awakened in them the taste for classical studies. When, owing to the exchange of ideas brought about by the great councils of Constance and Basle, and to the influence of Aeneas Sylvius, the study of ancient learning had found its way to Germany, Nuremberg was eager to attract the first representatives of the new movement. Foremost among them was the Würzburger, Gregory of Heimburg, a man equally learned in classical literature, and versed in both ecclesiastical and political matters, of whom Aeneas Sylvius records that he was without doubt the most learned and eloquent man in Germany, and that in him Latium seemed to have found a home in Germany, as Greece had formerly done in Latium; Martin Mayr, afterwards the liberal-minded chancellor of the Archbishop of Mayence; and Nicholas von Wyle, who greatly contributed to the culture of the people by his translations, and who as early as 1445 gave lessons to the youth of Nuremberg in German and Latin. All these held office in the city as councillors and secretaries of state during the

* Otto Jahn, *Aus der Alterthumswissenschaft*, 1868, p. 409. Compare K. Hagen, *Deutschlands literarische und religiöse Verhältnisse im Reformationszeitalter*, vol. iii. 1868.

middle of the fifteenth century. Heinrich Leubing, the vicar of St. Sebald's at that time, was won over to the study of ancient literature by Gregory of Heimburg; and Thomas Pirkheimer, the provost of St. Lawrence, was already reckoned as one of the classical scholars of his native town. Ulrich von Hutten could therefore with perfect truth assign to Nuremberg the honour of having been the first among German cities to cultivate the study of the *belles-lettres*.

When Gregory of Heimburg, between 1460–70, left Nuremberg, Johann Müller Regiomontanus,* the most celebrated astronomer of his time, formed there a new centre of scientific activity. He settled there in 1471, because, as he said, he could find no place so suitable for his studies. It was at Nuremberg that he wrote the greater number of his works, besides making astronomical instruments, and founding a printing-press for his own use. His most diligent pupil and the inheritor of all his books was Bernhard Walther, whose house, which was near the Thiergärtner Gate, and had an observatory attached to it, afterwards came into the possession of Dürer. Nuremberg, for a long time after, bore the palm for mathematical learning amongst German cities, not excepting even those with universities. In this way the newly awakened appetite for knowledge found every kind of nourishment in Nuremberg. When the council decided that the increasing importance of the town made it desirable that its past history should be recorded, they chose for this purpose Sigmund Meisterlin, an Augsburg monk, well read in Roman literature. Commissioned by the two Losunger, and at the expense of the city, Meisterlin, who was at the time parish priest at Gründlach and occasional preacher at St. Sebald's, brought out, about the year 1488, his Latin Chronicle of the town

* So called from his native place, Königsberg, in Prussia.

of Nuremberg, and soon followed it up with a German translation, containing corrections and additions. Of Hartmann Schedel, the author of a universal history (*Weltchronik*) which has become celebrated under the title of *Chronicon Norimbergense*, we shall have occasion to speak later. He was the town physician; and the zealous humanists, Heinrich Euticus and Dietrich Ulsen, of Friesland, were also Nuremberg physicians. The burgher Peter Dannhäuser was so devoted to classical literature that one of his ecclesiastical friends was afraid lest his close study of the heathen poets should endanger his Christianity.

Amongst the patricians who especially devoted themselves to the study of classical literature, Sebald Schreyer stood pre-eminent. He was born in 1446, and from 1482 to 1503 was bursar (*Kirchenmeister*) of St. Sebald's. Though advanced in years when he began to learn, he attained such proficiency that his house soon became a resort for all the scholars of the day. He supported art and literature not only by his goodwill but also with his fortune, and it was he who caused Schedel's Chronicle to be printed. Johann Löffelholz and Johann Pirkheimer, Wilibald's father, were educated in Italy, studied jurisprudence in Padua, became lawyers in their native city, and possessed valuable libraries. All these learned Nurembergers were united by friendship not only with each other but also with one who played a conspicuous part in the introduction of classical studies into Germany, Conrad Celtes. Crowned poet-laureate at Nuremberg by the emperor Frederick III. in 1487, he was the first German who received that honour. He often afterwards stayed at Nuremberg, and kept up a correspondence, besides, with all the learned men we have mentioned, as well as with Charitas, the accomplished sister of Wilibald Pirkheimer; one of his most beautiful odes is on Sebald Schreyer. During his second sojourn in Nuremberg, in 1491, his friends wished to establish a chair

of classical literature for him, and, when they found they could not get him to stay, they elected in his stead his friend, Heinrich Groninger. The influx of so much learning and culture had all the more effect in Nuremberg from the fact that it met with no hindrance there from any obstructive authority, either in the shape of a scholastic corporation or a powerful clergy.

The adhesion of Nuremberg throughout the middle ages to the emperor in the struggle against the papacy had tended to make the citizens, while still remaining sincerely pious, more liberal in religious matters. The tenets of the Waldenses had already made their way to Nuremberg. In the fourteenth century many of the citizens belonged to the "Society of the Friends of God," and the Hussite doctrines quickly found a hearing in the city. John Huss himself relates how, in passing through Nuremberg on his journey to Constance, he was warmly welcomed by all the people, and how he expounded his doctrines amid unanimous marks of approval from the burghers. The Nuremberg clergy held a subordinate position to the citizens. The council had the guardianship, and subsequently the complete control of all the churches and convents in the town and its dependencies. It chose the provosts and parish priests in defiance of the opposition of the diocesan, the Bishop of Bamberg, exercised supervision over the morals of the religious bodies, and introduced reforms into them even against the will of the monks and nuns, as, for instance, into St. Catherine's Convent in 1428, and St. Augustine's, in 1436. Thus in no place did the Reformation find the ground so well prepared to receive it as in Nuremberg.

Nowhere, indeed, had the popular opposition to the spirit of the middle ages penetrated so deeply into the minds of the masses as in Franconia. The breaking-up of the ancient duchy into innumerable territories, great and small, ecclesiastical and secular, ruled, some by nobles, some by burghers,

with the constant friction which it produced, allowed the lower orders to assume a more important position, and gave them more liberty of action. With the exercise of arms, poetry also had descended from the nobles to the people. The awakening consciousness of the less privileged classes began to make itself felt, not only in mass agitations and peasant riots, but in a popular literature which was more diligently cultivated here than in any other part of Germany. Its first important productions, the *Renner* of Hugo von Trimberg, and Boner's *Edelstein*, appeared on Franconian soil. There also the popular song (*Volkslied*) first opened its blossoms after the voice of the troubadour had ceased to be heard. Inspired by a sound commonsense which loved to clothe itself in the garb of folly, this national poetry laid hold of life in every shape, and barriers which force could not vanquish were set at nought by satirical songs.

With the growing love for spectacle amongst the people, farces again came into favour, and German poetry gradually passed into that stage in which the preponderating epic element is replaced by the dominion of the dramatic. The connecting link was formed by the sacred mysteries and passion plays at that time so universally in vogue. Just as the market and the mass went on together, profane and comic interludes crept into solemn religious representations. When at length people began to be shocked at this incongruous mixture of sacred and profane things, the carnival plays were entirely separated from the sacred mysteries. It was thus that comic dialogue first gained an independent footing in Nuremberg. But it was obliged to confine itself to incidents of the ordinary everyday life. No allusion could be made to foreign fashions in the presence of an uneducated audience, and any Latin was out of the question. It was the natural product of a time which was entirely taken up with itself.

The Nuremberger, Hans Rosenplüt, nicknamed the "*Schnepperer*" (prattler), is the first representative of this oldest form of German comedy; indeed, he is the precursor of all the different branches of popular verse which marked the period of the Reformation. In his lines on Nuremberg, written in the year 1447, he gives us an animated description of his native city:—

> "O Nuremberg, thou noble spot! — —
> Thy like will surely ne'er be found;
> Wise counsellors, obedient folk,
> A priesthood well-behaved, and bound
> Beneath so firm a rule and yoke
> That no one o'er the line can stray,
> And err with women, or at play," &c.

He next proceeds to speak of the unparalleled charitable institutions, amongst them a costly poor-house, and then describes the seven marvels of the city—the threefold walls with the wide moats and one hundred and eighty-seven towers; the forest; the quarry, which had furnished the materials for many buildings 48 feet high, such buildings as, had they stood upon a hill, might have been taken for palaces; the public granary; the Schöne Brunnen; the Pegnitz, which turned within the walls sixty-seven mill-wheels, not one of which a hostile prince could stop; and, lastly, the imperial jewels. He praises the city as one of the first seats of learning and art, making special mention of the skill of its coppersmiths; he exalts its merchants, its commerce, and its wealth, acquired honourably, not by fraud or robbery; but the crowning points of all its glory are the exemplary order that reigns within its walls and its love of peace.* Such songs of praise are, however, exceptional with Rosenplüt; he says himself at the end, "The ass never kicks the miller." His other songs and his car-

* Lochner, *Der Spruch von Nürnberg, beschreibendes Gedicht des Hans Rosenplüt; Text mit Erläuterungen*, Nuremberg, 1854.

nival plays are full of that spirit of political satire which afterwards found its keenest exponent in Ulrich von Hutten. Rosenplüt's farces and jokes are still somewhat rough in form, mere dialogues in fact, mostly coarse in subject, but not without a good, serious meaning underneath. He was followed by his younger contemporary and fellow-citizen, the barber Hans Folz, who had his own printing-press. After these two came Hans Sachs, who at first pursued the same light strain in the style of Lucian's Dialogues, till under the influence of Terence's plays, which became known about that time, he adopted the forms of the regular drama. Jacob Ayrer was another Nuremberg author.

The development of German comedy in Nuremberg naturally had a great influence on the fine arts. Not only did it supply painting with an infinite variety of subjects, but, whilst powerfully exciting the imagination of the artist, it led him by the simplicity of the representations to try and be true to nature. Popular literature and art, combined with the thriving commercial life of Nuremberg, especially favoured the advance of printing and engraving. Card and letter painters, wood engravers, and illuminators, found ample employment. A man like Anton Koburger soon obtained a European celebrity for his printing. When he was compelled to travel to Paris in 1476 to protect his property, the Nuremberg council commended him to Louis XI., "because he carried on such a considerable trade in France through his numerous agents." In 1499, a Paris publisher, Jodocus Badius, dedicated his edition of Politianus' Letters to him, and calls him in the dedication a venerator and promoter of learning, and the king of booksellers.*

* O. Hase, *Die Koburger*, Leipzig, 1869, p. 13; Neudörffer, *Nachrichten von den vornehmsten Künstlern*, etc. p. 56. Neudörffer's work was written at Nuremberg in 1546, and published by Campe in 1829. A new edition of it appeared at Vienna in 1875.

He worked with twenty-four presses, and employed over a hundred compositors, correctors, pressmen, illuminators, bookbinders, etc. He had agents in every country, and in many towns book-stalls. Moreover, fate had ordained that he, the first printer and publisher of his age, should stand sponsor to Albert Dürer.

Thus the geographical centre of Germany had also gradually become the intellectual one. The old German state founded by the Franconian race had, in the pursuit of too widely extended aims, encountered its downfall. The dismemberment of the territory and the feebleness of its new rulers, among whom the Bishop of Würzburg held the empty title of duke, was only the prelude to complete dissolution. But at the same time it contained the germ of a new development which showed itself when, though the political life of the nation was past help, there was still a hope of saving its intellectual existence. Then the Franconian race again took its stand as the centre and stay of the divided German nationalities. As all the various sources of German life necessarily met together in Franconia, they there found that expression which most closely approached the fundamental national feeling of the whole country. All that was too abstract in the Swabian, too realistic in the Saxon, too volatile in the Rhinelander, too stolid in the Bavarian, was found by each and all harmoniously blended in the Franconian. It was thus only natural that Franconian cities should give birth to the two artists in whom German sentiment has found its fullest expression and its truest conception, to the poet of the eighteenth century and to the painter of the fifteenth—to Goethe and to Dürer.

CHAPTER III.

THE DÜRER FAMILY.

"Whence he sprang, and how he came here and stayed."—DÜRER.



UCH was the state of affairs at Nuremberg when, on the 11th March 1455, a wandering journeyman, by name Albert Dürer, twenty-eight years of age, and a goldsmith by profession, quietly entered the town.* His home lay in far distant Hungary. His ancestors had earned their living by farming and cattle-breeding in what was no doubt a German settlement named Eytas,† near the little town of Gyula, eight (German) miles southwest of Grosswardein. His father Antony had, however, been apprenticed as a boy to a goldsmith at Gyula, now a market-place of about 15,500 inhabitants. Of his three sons, Albert, the eldest, followed his father's trade; the second, Laszlo or

* *Dürers Briefe, Tagebücher und Reime*, translated by M. Thausing, Vienna, 1872, p. 69.

† Pronounced in Hungarian, Eytasch. In Hungary the name has in modern times been derived from *ajtós*, formed from *ajtó*, a door, because Dürer carried a door in his coat-of-arms. According to that definition, the Magyar name of the "noble" family is said to have been Ajtósi. *Allgem. Zeitung*, 1873, No. 47, p. 708, from the *Ungar. Lloyd* of February 9, and the *Századok*, the organ of the Historical Society of Hungary.

Ladislas, became a saddler; and the youngest, John, studied, and was for a long time parish priest at Grosswardein. Albert, the goldsmith, in the course of his wanderings came to Germany, and, after working some time with the great masters of the trade in the Netherlands, reached Nuremberg. The moment of his arrival was opportune, for on that same day Philip Pirkheimer, a scion of one of the best families of the town, was celebrating his marriage at the castle (*auf der Veste*), and there was a great dance under the broad lime in the courtyard. The festive aspect which the town presented to him on his first entry probably appeared to the wanderer a happy omen for the future, and he did not forget to mention it in his simple relation of the events of his life. But what to the young goldsmith must have been more especially attractive was the splendour displayed on this occasion by the guests, who all belonged to the governing class, and the wealth of silver, which in Nuremberg paid no tax, and he must have felt that here was a rich opening for his handicraft. What, however, he could not foresee was that his name would one day rank with that of the master of the fête, nay, would even outshine it.

The wandering journeyman found permanent employment with a highly esteemed master of his art, Hieronymus Holper,* whose name appears in 1461 among the four nominated by the council jurors of their company, with the designation attached to it of "silver weigher" (*Silberwäger*). His men must have assisted him loyally, not only in the workshop, but in his public functions, for already in the following year the council gave orders for him to share half the hall-

* Lochner, in the *Nürnberger Correspondent* of August 18, 1858, No. 421, has proved this beyond a doubt from documents in the archives. The hitherto accepted name of "Haller" in the only existing copy of the family chronicle—one which was done at a very late date—must have originated in an error by the copyist. At any rate, the attempt to identify him with a member of the patrician family of Haller was a mistake.

mark dues with them. Master Holper appears to have carried on a very considerable business, and to have possessed house property; at least in Endres Tucher's account of the architects of Nuremberg, mention is made of "Holper's house" in 1467.* By his wife Kunigunde, of the family of Oellinger of Weissenburg, he had a daughter named Barbara. The child was scarcely grown up before the stranger journeyman Albert had so won the approval of her parents that they chose him for their son-in-law; and in the year 1467, he, then forty years old, led to the altar his bride of fifteen, "a pretty, well-grown maiden," as Dürer tells us she is called in his father's memoranda. It must have been partly through the good offices of his master that at the same time "Holper's son-in-law named Albert" was invited by the council to take with his master an oath to honestly perform the office of marker and weigher, and was further instructed to become a burgher of Nuremberg. These directions he complied with on the 8th July 1468, when he paid down the customary fee of ten florins to the goldsmiths' company for the privilege of being entered as master, and for the right of citizenship two florins, which was the lowest tax on a fortune under a hundred florins. On this occasion Albert was first called by his family name of Dürer, not because he then adopted it for the first time, but more probably because as an immigrant he had hardly been known by anything else but his Christian name until taking this formal step. Even on the 29th March 1470 he again calls himself "Albert, Holper's son-in-law," when taking his oath as assayer and member of the goldsmiths' company.

Albert Dürer the Elder, as he was afterwards called, to distinguish him from his famous son, occupied at that time

* Weech and Lexer's *Bibliothek des literarischen Vereines*, Stuttgart, 1862, p. 114.

the back part of Johann Pirkheimer's house in the Herrenmarkt, opposite the Schöne Brunnen and the Frauenkirche, looking on to a courtyard and the Winklerstrasse. Once again fate brought the names of Dürer and Pirkheimer together at a momentous time. We have already spoken of the latter as a warm patron of the new classical studies; and if he was zealous in promoting a love for them in his native city, he was none the less anxious to give them due importance in his own house. The care he bestowed on his children's education is shown not only by the history of his famous son Wilibald, but by the learning of his daughters Charitas and Clara. Both these, who became sisters, and were afterwards in succession abbesses, of the Convent of St. Clara, knew how to make good use of their Latin, and were in correspondence with the first men of the day, such as Erasmus of Rotterdam and Conrad Celtes. On the 5th of December 1470, a much desired and only son was born to Johann Pirkheimer, then bishop's councillor at Eichstädt; and on the 21st May in the following year, 1471, a third child and second son of Albert Dürer the goldsmith saw the light in the back part of the rich patrician's house. Anton Koburger, the first printer in Nuremberg, and afterwards of all Germany, stood sponsor to him at his baptism, and called the boy Albert, after his father. The burgher family of the Dürers was certainly not on terms of intimacy with the noble families of the town, but the two boys, of the same age, and living in the same house, may often have played together in early days. Perhaps the germs of that close friendship which afterwards bound together the two greatest men in Nuremberg, the artist and the scholar, took root at that early time in their youthful hearts. Certainly the feeling for all that was beautiful and great which pervaded the Pirkheimer household may well have penetrated with the first dawn of intelligence into the susceptible mind

of the young Dürer. This intercourse, however, had no further consequences, for Albert was barely four years old when his father gave up his abode in Pirkheimer's house.

Old Hieronymus Holper had probably died shortly before this, and it was no doubt a share of his property which enabled Dürer the Elder to buy a house of his own, on May 12, 1475. It was the one belonging to the goldsmith Peter Kraft, at the corner of the street then called Unter der Vesten, now the Burgstrasse, leading up to the imperial castle. The price was two hundred florins, and there was, besides, an annual rent of four florins in current coin of the city, to be paid to the Pfinzing family, which was equivalent to a debt of a hundred florins. The surroundings into which the family were thrown by this change were not without influence on Albert Dürer's future; and in examining the neighbourhood we discover many well-known names. Dürer's own house, No. 493, Unter der Vesten, is at the corner facing the Upper Schmiedgasse; and it was just in front of it that triumphal arches were erected on the occasion of an imperial visit, or any similar festivity. Two numbers lower down stand the two houses near the Schildröhre,* which the painter Michel Wolgemut owned and lived in successively. These are only separated by the narrow Kramergässlein (Mercers' Lane) from the house of the famous Doctor Hartmann Schedel; next comes the house of Sebald Frey, the uncle of Dürer's future wife; and, farther down, the house of his godfather, Anton Koburger. These houses make up the left side of the street, going towards the castle, the right being chiefly occupied by the Predigerkirche (Church of the Dominicans), and the convent buildings attached to it.†

* The name of a fountain.

† See the plan of the position of the house in G. W. K. Lochner's *Topographische Tafeln zur Geschichte der Reichstadt Nürnberg* (Dresden, J. Wolf, 1873), pl. i. of the year 1500.

In this neighbourhood the elder Dürer was highly respected. He was elected master of the guild of goldsmiths in 1482, and the implements of this office of trust —the three leathers with the touch-needles—were deposited with him. A few weeks later he became "*Gassenhauptmann*" (Captain of the Streets), an office which involved the charge and superintendence of his quarter of the town. The esteem in which he was held by his fellow-citizens was entirely due to his personal ability, his industry, and his honourable character. His income was barely enough for the requirements of his numerous family. In twenty-four years his wife Barbara presented him with a stately row of eighteen children, the dates of whose births he carefully noted down to the very hour, together with the names of their respective god-parents. Amongst the latter, on the mention of the sixteenth child, in the year 1488, we find the wife of the astronomer Bernhard Walther, already referred to, whose house near the Thiergärtner Thor Dürer purchased in 1500. Though many of these children never lived to grow up, still it is easy to understand that his father's life was, as Dürer himself records, "one of great anxiety and hard labour." A nephew, Nicholas, was also added to the family, and made an apprentice. This nephew was the son of the younger brother, the saddler, Ladislas. Dürer, in one of his letters of the year 1524,* speaks of him as living at Cologne, and as being known by the name of "Niklas Unger;" and on the occasion of his journey to the Netherlands, he paid his cousin a visit at that place. When Nicholas went to live at Cologne, however, is not known. He first established himself as a master goldsmith at Nuremberg, and became a burgher and married there; and a contemporary record shows

* *Dürers Briefe*, p. 69.

that on the 20th May 1493 he was the owner of a house, near the Malerthor (Painter's Gate), in the Bergamentergasse.*

Of the skill of Albert Dürer the Elder in his craft, there is unfortunately no evidence. We only know that from 1486 until his death he had a retail shop near the town-hall, for which he paid a yearly rent of five florins. His son writes of him, "Everyone who knew him spoke well of him, for he led a worthy Christian life, was patient and gentle, at peace with every one, and always thankful to God. He did not seek worldly pleasures, was a man of few words, kept little company, and feared God. My dear father was very earnest about bringing up his children in the fear of God, for it was his greatest desire to lead them aright, so that they might be pleasing to God and man. And his daily injunction to us was that we should love God and deal uprightly with our neighbours."

This description of his father Dürer has completed for us by two portraits. The first was done at the close of his apprenticeship, before he started upon his wanderings, as if he wished to give the old man a proof of what he had learnt. This picture is now in the Uffizii Gallery at Florence, and represents the old master a little turned to the left, against a dark green background, in a black cap and jacket and a brown overcoat. The face and the hands, which hold a red rosary, are wonderfully life-like; the expression is one of dignified earnestness and kindly repose, with strong lines of determination about the mouth; and the eyes, small indeed, but clear and intelligent, look out upon the world with a keen glance that seems to interrogate the future. Hardly any likeness, except a certain regularity of feature, can be traced in the full, reserved face of the father to the elongated, open countenance of the son. The roundness of the

* Nuremberg town archives, literæ 10, fol. 23. Communicated by Lochner.

forms is brought out to perfeetion by grey shadows; the tone of the colouring is singularly true and clear. The hands, holding a rosary between the fingers, are well preserved, and wonderfully drawn and full of life; and the painting is unusually broad and vigorous. The reverse side of this small deal panel also deserves attention, for on it are painted the family arms of the elder Dürer: a elosed helmet, bearing a Moor's bust with pointed red cap and red jacket with yellow facings, between two golden wings, surmounts two shields, one of which shows an open gold door on a red ground, the other a white ram on a blue field. In the first of these scuteheons, which was that adopted by the painter, we reeognise the arms of the Dürers, or Thürers, as the family was originally called; but the seeond joined with it can only belong to Dürer's mother, and clearly proves that she was not a Haller by birth, the arms being undoubtedly those of the Holper family.

The other and better known picture of his father was painted by Dürer soon after his return, when he, no doubt, considered himself bound to show the good old man what progress he had made during his wanderings. This portrait, which bears on a dark background, the colour of wood, the inseription, "1497 ALBRECHT THVRER DER ELTER VND ALT 70 JOR" ("Albert Dürer the Elder at the age of 70"), is now at Sion House, in the possession of the Duke of Northumberland. It formerly belonged to the Earl of Arundel, and was then, in 1644, engraved by Wenzel Hollar. Old copies of it exist in the Städel Institute at Frankfurt and in the Pinakothek at Munich; the latter was lithographed by N. Strixner in 1814. In it the elder Dürer again appears in a black eap and under-jacket with a brown overcoat lined with fur. Age has indeed marked the honest faee with deep furrows, but there is still a profusion of unblanched hair visible beneath the cap; his tired hands lie folded before

him, while he gazes out into the world with a simple-hearted earnest look, and an expression of happy contentment playing round his delicate lips. This picture is conceived in the same vigorous style as the Florentine portrait, but the colour is darker, and it has been injured by cleaning. During his son's four years' absence a great change had come over the father. The separation from his favourite child, added to the effects of years of trial and sorrow, had told upon his strength; and though still as upright as ever, he had become, by the time his son returned, a reserved, silent old man. It was a great thing for him now to have a grateful son to take his place, and help him to bear the burden of life, as Albert most conscientiously did.

For what is known of the history of the elder Dürer, we are, as every one knows, indebted to his famous son, whose account does his father great honour, and speaks of him in the highest terms. At the same time it enables us to ascertain the kind of education, by no means to be undervalued, which the boy enjoyed. From it we gain a deep insight into the laborious, well conducted, and God-fearing life of a German burgher family. This was the source whence Dürer first derived that spirit-stirring power which enabled him to embody in his art the feelings of an age struggling for freedom of thought. No hollow enthusiasm, no sham and worthless sentimentality, no internal misgivings, had any place there. A firm hold on reality, coupled with a deep-seated religious faith, prevented the mind from ever falling into despondency. Such natures were too healthy and too elastic to be affected for any length of time by the hardest blows. The simpler and deeper their feelings, the more quickly do they turn to active life again, and throw their whole being into their work. It is this single-minded energy which is so marked and attractive a characteristic of the work of that period, and which lends such

a charm to the smallest details of Dürer's homely narrative of his father's and mother's death. Between souls of such simplicity there exists unconsciously a profound harmony which may well escape the notice of the casual observer. It is only when the final parting has taken place that any idea can be formed of how much the inner life of the one was bound up with that of the other. All that passes under the influence of strong natural feeling in the minds of such beings wholly devoid of affectation far outweighs any of the sentimental nonsense that people of the present day are so fond of talking.

Five years after Dürer had taken the last portrait of his father, the latter died, not of old age, but of an attack of dysentery. "When he felt death approaching, he resigned himself to it willingly, with great patience," writes Dürer. He died after midnight on the 20th September 1502; and his son relates how they ran to his room at the last moment to wake him; "but before I could get down, he had departed, and when I saw that he was dead, I felt deeply grieved that I had not been counted worthy to see his end!" The old man, on his dying bed, had commended the mother to the son's care. "My father," Dürer says, "had always spoken to me of her with the highest praise as a truly pious woman, and I am fully determined never to forsake her."

True to the resolution he thus records, Dürer, two years afterwards, took his mother to his own home. He describes with touching minuteness how diligently the old woman went to church, how carefully she admonished him when he did not act rightly, and how anxious she always was about the welfare of his own and his brothers' souls. "Whether I went in or out, her invariable words were, 'Go in the name of Christ!'" Her benevolence to all, her gentleness of spirit under all the crosses of life, and her good

repute are themes of which her son never wearies. He, on his part, watched over her with the utmost tenderness and care. Even during his stay in Venice, in 1506, he is always thoughtful of her, and he begs Pirkheimer to ask her to write to him, and to tell her "that she is to take good care of herself"; and he also admonishes his younger brother Hans not to be a burden to her.* On the evening of the 16th of May 1514, after nearly a year's illness, feeling her death approaching, she sent for Dürer, and, with much good and loving advice, gave him her blessing, and commended him to the peace of God. She then begged for the parting-cup, called the "loving-cup" (*Minnebecher*) or "St. John's blessing" (*St. Johannissegen*). "She had a great fear of death, she said, but was not at all afraid of appearing before God." And Dürer further writes, "Her death was a painful one; and I remarked that she appeared to see something terrifying, for she asked for holy water, though for a long time previously she had not spoken." As he was repeating the prayer for the dying, she expired, "and I felt," he says, "a sorrow that I cannot express. May God be merciful to her!" And in conclusion, the painter cannot refrain from adding: "She looked far lovelier in death than she had done in life. She was in her three-and-sixtieth year when she died, and I buried her with all honour according to my means." †

On the 19th March 1514, during her illness, and two months before her death, Dürer did a large charcoal drawing of his mother, which is now in the Berlin Museum.‡ The sharply outlined head of the old woman, with the marked honest features and the strangely expressive eyes, has something very touching about it. From this portrait, and

* Thausing, *Dürers Briefe, Tagebücher und Reime*, &c., pp. 10, 12.

† *Dürers Briefe*, &c., p. 75, l. 4; p. 136, l. 14; and p. 137, l. 20; and notes.

‡ Woltmann, *Jahrbücher für Kunstwissenschaft*, iv. p. 249. It was purchased at the Firmin Didot sale in Paris for 4900 francs.

from the written accounts that Dürer has left of his mother, we gather that she must have had a powerful influence on the development of his character, his imagination, and his religious views. Of the portraits of his father and mother, said to have been in the possession of the Imhoffs, and in the town-hall of Nuremberg, no trace can now be found.*

It is not possible to ascertain how many and which of Dürer's eighteen brothers and sisters grew up with him in his father's house. When he collected his notes about the family, in 1524, only two were alive, Andreas, the goldsmith, born in 1484, and Hans, the youngest of the three brothers thus named, born in 1490, a painter, and pupil of Albert's. The other brothers and sisters had died, Dürer remarks, "some in childhood, and some grown up." If we are to believe a notice in the Imhoff inventories,† there had been in the possession of that family a drawing representing a fiddler, a youth, and a girl, which originally belonged to Anton Dürer, the elder Dürer's sixth child, born in 1474. There is more probability in another tradition, according to which a portrait of a young man in his twentieth year, formerly in the Praun Collection, and now in the Pinakothek at Munich (Cab. 147), is said to represent a brother of Dürer's, named Hans. It is a beardless, bony face with deep-set eyes; the neck is long and bare, and the head covered with a net, over which is drawn a brown cap. The thin, irregular features, though hard and almost coarse, are life-like, and painted in strong brown flesh tones. The whole of the picture, of which there is a good lithograph by Strixner, bears, even to the date on it, of 1500, unmistakable signs of

* See v. Eye, *Dürer*, Synoptical Table, 19. The authenticity of these portraits is doubted by Hans Hieronymus Imhoff himself. K. van Mander, *Het Schilder-Boeck* (2nd edition, Amsterdam, 1618), fol. 132, col. 2, mentions a portrait of the mother in the town-hall of Nuremberg.

† A. Springer, *Mittheilungen der Wiener Central-Commission*, vol. v. p. 357.

the handiwork of Albert Dürer. The portrait is evidently that of an apprentice in his work-a-day clothes, for no one would sit specially for his picture in such a slovenly dress and with such a slouching air. That it was some one connected with Dürer may be inferred from the fact of the same person appearing as one of the side figures in a school picture that issued from Dürer's studio in 1502, and which is referred to later on. This head has little resemblance to the noble countenance of the master, but rather recalls the features of his brother Andreas, though cast in a far coarser mould. Its identity has lately been disputed on the ground that in 1500 Hans Dürer was only ten years old; but it must be remembered that there were two older brothers called Hans, one born in 1470, the other in 1478. If not the first of this name, it may very well have been the second. A further argument in favour of this identification is supplied by the existing record of the admittance of a Hans Dürer into the tailors' guild of Nuremberg in 1507.*

Of the younger brothers who outlived Dürer, Andreas probably worked in his father's workshop until the death of the latter, and was then, at the age of eighteen, sent out to travel. The youngest of the three named Hans, then in his twelfth year, Dürer took as his own pupil, and was soon able to make use of him in his studio. But the boy—who no doubt, as the youngest but one of the family, had been rather spoilt—does not appear to have behaved well while Dürer was away in 1506, and the latter consequently advised his mother to look out for some work for him. "I would," he says, in writing to Pirkheimer, "have willingly taken him with me to Venice, and it would have been useful for us both, but his mother was afraid that the skies would fall

* Baader, *Jahrbücher für Kunstwissenschaft*, i. p. 222.

on him!" He further begged Pirkheimer to look after the boy, and to seriously admonish him to study and behave properly till his return. In 1509 Hans was still working in his brother's studio. All that we know of him after this is that on the night of July 30, 1510, he was stabbed by one Martin Rueker, of Wemding, servant to Christoph Kressens, probably on the occasion of some quarrel;* and that in 1529 and 1530 he was living at Cracow as court painter to the King of Poland.† Nothing is known of his skill as an artist, though Waagen indeed suggests that a Holy Family at Pommersfelden, with the date 1518, and the initials H. D., and in the manner of Albreeht Altdorfer, was painted by him.‡

Andreas or Endres Dürer became a master goldsmith in 1514, in his thirtieth year; and at that time, doubtless in honour of the event, Albert made a sketeh of his brother, carefully eross-hatehed in silver point on prepared paper with a white ground. The long, pointed, beardless face, in spite of the regular and attraetive features, bears very little likeness to Albert himself; while the more prominent eheek-bones, the less aquiline nose, the narrower ehin, and the slender throat, all combine to give him a less striking appearance than his brother. There is a cheerful expression

* The circumstance is mentioned in a minute of the town council of that date. See Lochner, *Anzeiger für Kunde der Vorzeit*, 1869, col. 231.

† In the archives of the government commission for the royal treasury of Poland there is a manuscript, entitled, "Regestrum perceptarum pecuniarum sacre M. regie a generoso domino Severino Boner Zupario Burgrabio magnoque procuratore Crac. Biecensi et Bapstinen. capit. etc. nobili Malchiero Czirzowsky vice-procuratori eiusdem a die 9 Jan. a. 1529 usque ad 31 Dec. 1529 pro edificio castri Cr. ad distribuend. commissar. percepta," and marked on the cover, "Regestrum edificiorum castri Crac. 1529 anno sexto G. D. S. B." In it "Hans Dürer pictor regie maiestatis" is often mentioned. See Lepkowski, in the periodical *Teka Wilenska*, 1857, No. 2, p. 220, &c. See too below, Chapter VI., the account of the division of Dürer's property at his decease in 1530.

‡ *Kunstwerke in Deutschland*, i. p. 127.

about the open brow and large clear eyes of the young master goldsmith; his hair is carefully gathered into a net, and round his neck is a neat high ruff. This drawing is in the Albertina at Vienna; it was engraved in 1785 by Adam Bartsch, and afterwards lithographed by Pilizotti. Andreas appears about this time to have married, but without making himself a comfortable home. On the 24th November 1518, we find him giving his brother, in the presence of Wilibald Pirkheimer and Lazarus Spengler, a legal quittance for his share of the paternal house in the Unter der Vesten, which had hitherto belonged to them both.* After Albert's death, Andreas must again have come into possession of this house on the division of the inheritance between him and his brother's widow, Frau Agnes; for twenty years later, on the 15th November 1538, he and his wife Ursula sold to the apothecary Quintin Werthaimer their property in the "Unter der Vesten, opposite Johann Neudörffer the accountant's house, at the corner of the Upper Schmiedgasse, property which he, the seller, had inherited from his late brother Albert Dürer." †

Andreas, meanwhile, had continued his trade at Nuremberg as a goldsmith, for in a judgment of July 26, 1521, the beadle (*Frohnbote*) Linhard Motschilder, as administrator of an estate, is ordered to restore to Andreas eleven rubies and an emerald which had been entrusted by him to the deceased.‡ As far as we know, he had by his wife Ursula only one child, a daughter, Constantia, whom documents bearing the dates of 1531 and 1533 prove to have also married a goldsmith, Gilg Kilian Proger. Notwithstanding their share in the not inconsiderable fortune left by Albert Dürer, this last branch of the family appears to have lived

* Documents in the Germanische Museum, printed in the *Anzeiger für Kunst der Vorzeit*, vii. 1860, col. 276.

† Nüremberg town archives, literæ 51, fol. 53.

‡ Nuremberg town archives, Conservatorium, vol. xxvii. fol. 203. Communicated by Herr Lochner.

in somewhat needy circumstances;* and it was on this account, perhaps, that Andreas quitted Nuremberg, and followed his brother Hans to Cracow, where he established himself as a goldsmith; but not having the permission of the town council to take this step, he was ordered by that body in 1534 to leave Cracow, and carry on his trade in his native place.† He appears to have obeyed this command, but in the year 1538 we find him again going to Cracow with a letter of recommendation from the Nuremberg town council to King Sigismund of Poland, stating that the bearer has numerous outstanding debts to recover in that country.‡ As the only business that Andreas was likely to have in Poland, and which could need a letter of recommendation, would be in connection with the affairs of his brother Hans, we may conjecture that the latter had died in the meanwhile. The subsequent history of the Dürer family is lost in obscurity, and, as its sole representative in the third generation appears to have been Andreas' daughter, Con tantia, any attempt to trace it farther would be fruitless. Her husband, Gilg, Gilich, or Egidius Kilian Proger, deserves mention in the history of art on account of his skill as an engraver on copper. He worked chiefly at small ornamental designs for goldsmiths, and his monogram, formed of the letters G, K (connected), and P, appears among the works of the so-called "Little Masters." Bartsch § mentions nine of his plates, to which Nagler ‖ adds two more; and the number might probably be doubled. The majority of those that are known bear the date 1533, others 1534 or 1540. There can be no doubt about their authenticity, for on one of them the date 1540 is accompanied by the

* Lochner, *Anz. für Kunde der Vorzeit*, 1869, col. 231.

† Baader, *Beiträge zur Kunstgeschichte*, ii. p. 25.

‡ Baader, *Jahrbücher für Kunstwissenschaft*, i. p. 246.

§ *Peintre-graveur*, ix. p. 33.

‖ *Monogrammisten*, iii. p. 25.

signature, "*Gilich Kilian Proger fecit.*" Proger is possibly only a nickname pointing to his having come originally from Prague. This is his mark, with some of his favourite foliage work:



Having given this outline of the general history of Dürer's family, there will be no occasion to revert to the subject again, and we may in future confine ourselves entirely to his own life. As there is nothing to show that the first two children of the elder Dürer outlived their infancy, Albert, the third, probably became at an early age the eldest of the family, and consequently was looked upon as the hope of the house, and received a better education than the others. Dürer himself says, "My father was particularly fond of me; and when he saw that I was diligent in my studies, he sent me to school, and as soon as I had learnt to read and write, he took me away, and taught me the goldsmith's trade." Like Johann von Miltenberg, born in 1478, the young Dürer, no doubt, learnt little besides a few Latin words at school; but however imperfect public instruction may have been at that time, the school discipline was undoubtedly of great importance for a gifted child like Dürer. Talent requires constant instruction and guidance, but genius, with its restless impulses, needs only to be given a good start, and to be early liberated from intellectual helplessness, in order to make its own way. The only necessary preparation for a boy destined to become a painter was, according to Dürer himself, "that he should be able to read and write well, and be sufficiently acquainted with Latin to read certain works." There is every reason to suppose that Dürer knew something of Latin, as he possessed Latin books, accepted the dedication of Pirkheimer's

Theophrastus, and always made use of faultless Latin inscriptions; besides which he informs us that he had read Vitruvius in his youth.*

Nothing is more natural than that the elder Dürer should have intended his son to follow the family trade; and accordingly, when the boy's schooling was over, probably at the age of thirteen, he was taken into the father's workshop; and even without his own positive testimony, we may conclude that the clever boy soon made himself master of the goldsmith's art. An old tradition has it that, while still an apprentice, he executed the seven Falls of Christ in silver.† But though none of his nor indeed of his father's, goldsmith's work has been preserved, it is certain that the study of the trade must have been of the greatest importance for his artistic career, since through it he gained early familiarity with plastic art, and first became conscious of a feeling for material form and delicate modelling, and of a restless desire for that correct perspective and sense of proportion which he was the first to introduce into German art. No doubt, too, the knowledge of working in metal which he then acquired greatly aided the wonderful inventive genius he afterwards displayed in the art of engraving on copper. Of this art itself, indeed, it is probable that he learnt no more than the first rudiments in his father's workshop, for the simple flat ornamentation at that time employed by the Nuremberg goldsmiths could not have taught him much about it. Here and there in Germany goldsmiths had occasionally tried their hands at engraving plates for printing, but their work was very inferior to that of their Italian fellow craftsmen; and the highest point of excellence to which

* Zahn, *Die Dürer-Handschriften des Brit. Museums*, in the *Jahrbücher für Kunstwissenschaft*, i. pp. 12 and 14.

† The seven Falls of Christ correspond with the seven Sorrows of the Virgin, beginning with the Betrayal, and ending with the Crucifixion. In old wood engravings of the subject, Christ is represented seven times in the act of falling.

a mere goldsmith could attain as an engraver on copper is seen in the rough specimens by Israel van Mecken. Moreover, Mecken's best engravings are never original, but only spoilt copies of better models. In Germany it is the painter who is always the inventive genius, and supplies the goldsmith with designs, as Dürer and Holbein did. Dürer, indeed, maintained that painting embraced everything that we now call the arts of design. "To paint," he says, "is to represent any object in any way on any flat surface." * Putting aside altogether any question of the material employed, he defines the aim of painting to be the reproduction on a flat surface of any object occupying space. The training of a goldsmith was not, at that time, nearly so thorough in Germany as in Italy, and it may be safely assumed that Dürer's first essays in drawing by no means owed their origin to his studies in the goldsmith's shop under the strict eyes of his father; they are much more likely to have been the forbidden fruits of stolen leisure moments. A proof of this is supplied by a drawing now in the British Museum, the inscription on which records the actual circumstances under which they were made. This drawing, slightly sketched in chalk on reddish paper, represents a woman standing, holding a falcon upon ner hand, and wearing a peculiar close-fitting, pointed Burgundian cap, from which hangs a veil. On it is written, evidently in the hand of one of the little goldsmith's playfellows: "Albert Dürer did this for me a long time ago, before he went to learn painting in Wolgemut's house, on the upper floor in the back building, in the presence of the late Conrad Lomayer." † Thus, at odd moments, and in out-of-the-way corners of his father's or of a friend's house, with his astonished comrades

* *Jahrbücher für Kunstwissenschaft*, i. p. 13.

† Ibid. i. p. 183. The writing resembles that of the accountant Neudörffer.

looking on, did Dürer, breaking away from the traditional Gothic patterns and the favourite columbine blossoms of the metal-worker, make figure drawings from the first model that came to hand, and convince himself that he was destined to be something more than a mere goldsmith. "As soon as I was able," he says, "to work tolerably well, I felt more inclination for painting than for the goldsmith's trade, and represented this to my father; but he was not well pleased, for he regretted the lost time that had been occupied in learning the trade. However, he gave in to me, and in the year 1486, on the 30th November, St. Andrew's Day, he apprenticed me to Michel Wolgemut for three years."

Fortunately, there are in existence other drawings of Dürer's, made during the time of his apprenticeship to his father, which show that the time had not been so lost as the good old man supposed. His earliest authentic work is his own likeness at the age of thirteen, in the Albertina at Vienna, with the autograph afterwards appended by himself, "I did this counterfeit of myself from a looking-glass, in 1484, when I was yet a child. Albert Dürer." The portrait is a half-length, drawn with the silver-point on prepared paper, and executed with a freedom truly astonishing, considering his age. It is a thoughtful, charming child's face, in which one can easily trace the fine features of the future man. The long hair, according to the custom of the day, is cut straight across the brow. On the head is a cap, the end of which is fastened on the top with three buttons, and hangs over on the side in a long fringe, which seems to be trimmed with bright-coloured feathers. He wears a loose jacket, which he grasps with his left hand, while the right is held out in a conventional manner, with the forefinger and thumb extended. The lower portions of the face are very true and well modelled; and the hair especially shows marks of his subsequent peculiar and masterly handling of that part of



VIRGIN AND CHILD.

(*From the Pen Drawing in the Berlin Museum, done in* 1485.)

To face p. 59, Vol. I.

his subject. On the other hand, the eyes have a hard, awkward look, owing, no doubt, to their not having been done from nature; a disadvantage which he had not then knowledge enough to counterbalance. Not that, indeed, the eyes were ever at any time a strong point in his pictures; they too often have a staring, constrained look. There is a startling resemblance, at first sight, in certain parts of this drawing—in, for example, the position and exaggerated length of the right hand, and the disposal of the draperies—to the type of portrait in Hartmann Schedel's Chronicle.

Pleasing as this portrait is, however, another drawing, dated a year later, in 1485, shows in an even more striking manner the rare precocity of the artist. This drawing, formerly in the Posonyi collection at Vienna, afterwards in the Hullot collection at Paris, and now in the Berlin Museum, represents the Virgin seated under a canopy, with an angel on either side, one playing the lute, the other the harp. The Virgin has an elongated type of face, with a high forehead, and wears a massive crown, in the style of the Cologne school of that day, from under which a profusion of hair flows over her shoulders. With her head slightly inclined to the left, she gazes calmly at the infant Saviour, whom she holds upright on her lap, and whose eyes are raised to hers as he embraces her. Though the child's body and the hands of the mother are badly drawn, the whole sentiment of the picture is wonderfully tender and sweet, and the two angels, looking half curiously, half reverently, at the group, are in charming harmony with the rest. The rich draperies fall in sharp, angular folds, while the Gothic throne, the flowers in the foreground, the restrained pose of the figures, and their symmetrical arrangement, bear all the impress of the old style, and are imbued with a purity and grace, such as we never again meet with in Dürer. The contrast between this and his later

style is so great that no one would have suspected the picture to be his if the sheet had not borne at the bottom, clear and genuine, his earliest signature—an A and a D, side by side—and the date 1485. The clever handling of the silver-point in his own portrait of the year before is astonishing enough, but that a boy of fourteen should have been able to use the pen in the way he has done in this other work is simply inexplicable. Both the drawings presume not only continual practice, but also a distinct purpose, and an artistic conception far above the demands of the goldsmith's craft, and much beyond anything he could have learned from his father.

The accompanying woodcuts, which faithfully represent these two early works will serve to support these statements, and to convince at a glance anyone acquainted with the history of the art of painting that the drawing in them was not done by the uncertain hand of a self-educated youth independent of teaching and example. Apart from any resemblance to the general character of the art of the day, or to the particular phase of it developed at Nuremberg, these works show distinct signs of the influence of a definite school of painting. That this school was no other than Michel Wolgemut's is placed beyond a doubt by the numerous points of comparison suggested by the *Schatzbehalter* and Schedel's *Weltchronik*. The little goldsmith, it is clear, at an early age walked in the steps of the painter who was afterwards to be his teacher; and when we consider the situation of the houses, already described, in the Unter der Vesten, it is easy to see how this came about. Whenever Dürer went in or out, he had to pass by Wolgemut's house. The painter's apprentices were probably his playfellows, and curiosity may often have enticed him into the famous studio where so many orders were executed. A little farther down the street lived his godfather, the wealthy

Koburger, where he had the opportunity of seeing how the woodcuts from Wolgemut's drawings were printed. It was quite natural, therefore, when the boy begged his father to let him be a painter, that Wolgemut, whose studio he had thus early been in the habit of running in and out of, and who, no doubt, had already noticed his clever touch, should have been chosen as his master. The choice had, indeed, been already made. Christoph Scheurl's statement in his eulogy on Anton Kress, printed in 1515, and afterwards repeated by Neudörffer, that the elder Dürer had thought of sending his son to study under Martin Schongauer at Colmar, must be erroneous.* Though the considerate parent finally yielded, perhaps not without the intercession of his neighbour and the boy's godfather, to the wishes of his darling, and allowed him to exchange the paternal workshop for the painter's studio, it is not likely that he would have given his consent to any more extensive plans involving corresponding sacrifices, especially as there was no necessity for it. Master Wolgemut was then at the zenith of his fame. He was an estimable and wealthy man, with a reputation as an artist which was not confined within the walls of his native city, for orders poured in upon him from all sides. Nuremberg, we may confidently assume, was proud of his studio, and thought him as good a painter as any in Germany; and if the elder Dürer shared this opinion with his fellow citizens, he was, as we shall see, not far wrong.

* See Schnaase, *Mittheilungen der k. k. Central-Commission*, Vienna, viii. p. 187.

CHAPTER IV.

MICHEL WOLGEMUT.

"Fourthly, art is of service in acquiring great and lasting fame, if only it is put to proper use."—DÜRER.



ICHEL WOLGEMUT'S place in the history of art is the best proof of the value of his teaching to Dürer; for the latter, while following with rapid strides in the path pointed out to him by his old master, soon eclipsed his fame; and now Wolgemut is hardly mentioned except in connection with his great pupil. Neudörffer, in 1547,* only mentions one painting of Wolgemut's, and Doppelmayr† declares that his works have disappeared in the lapse of time. There could not, however, be any serious dispute about the woodcuts in Hartmann Schedel's *Weltchronik* being his, as his name is expressly mentioned at the end of the work; yet doubts were raised as to how far he was connected in it with Wilhelm Pleydenwurff, an artist whose name is sometimes joined with his; and an attempt was made, by declaring Wolgemut to be a mere engraver on wood and commonplace artisan, to depreciate his share in that great work, and so enhance the fame of Pleydenwurff.

* *Nachrichten*, Nuremberg, 1828, p. 35.
† *Nachrichten*, Nuremberg, 1730, p. 181.

Thus the idea gradually gained ground that Dürer could not have learnt much from Wolgemut; and it was in consequence exceedingly difficult to follow his gradual development, and unravel the riddle of his career; there being nothing more puzzling than a string of important facts without any clue to their origin. It is plain, however, that this idea of his being so little indebted to Wolgemut was chiefly brought about by the manner in which Dürer speaks of his apprenticeship. "During that time God gave me diligence, so that I learnt much, but I had to suffer a great deal from the journeymen."* More attention has hitherto been paid to the latter part of this sentence than to the first, and the conclusion has been drawn that Dürer got more ill-treatment than instruction at Wolgemut's. But though he may have suffered from the rough usage which was as common then among those who worked in a studio as it is uncommon now, he never complained of his master, and remained on friendly terms with him to the end of his life. The real significance of these words, which seem merely to describe the everyday circumstances of his life, lies in the clue they give to his own personal character. They show the deep impression which this ill-treatment left on his tender and sensitive nature, and, as it were, reveal to us the indignation of the more advanced mind protesting against the roughness of the age, and the proud self-consciousness of the respected burgher who cannot forget the insults he suffered as a child. But it is time to enquire how much Dürer managed to learn with "this God-given diligence" while with Wolgemut; and this can only be done by first finding out what Michel Wolgemut himself achieved.

The task is by no means an easy one; and it is only

* *Dürers Briefe*, p. 74, l. 12. See also the note (p. 203) upon the incorrect rendering of the passage.

undertaken from the firm conviction that such an investigation is absolutely necessary for the further pursuit of our subject. Little material exists for the purpose, and what there is seems often to be wanting in proof; but however imperfect the result of our enquiry, it may perhaps lead to a better understanding being formed of the great master, and may help others to a more successful solution of the difficult problem. The first thing to be ascertained is, What place did Wolgemut occupy in the history of German art?—for in the answer to this question lies the true explanation of Dürer's own progress.

In forming an estimate of Michel Wolgemut's paintings, no account must be taken of the numerous more or less rough daubs to be found in Nuremberg, and elsewhere, with his name affixed to them. Every German school of painting has a tolerable number of such purely mechanical productions; and if the Nuremberg school of the fifteenth century appears richer in them than any other, the fact is easily accounted for by its enormous productiveness. The only paintings which can with any certainty, in default of signature, be traced back to Wolgemut's studio are a few large altar-pieces; and it is a matter of doubt how much even of these was the work of his own hand. Wolgemut appears chiefly to have undertaken large works, in the execution of which he was assisted by others, so that it is difficult to trace his own hand in them. But with all that he never sank the artist in the man of business, and all these vast productions bear the impress of a great mind, undaunted by difficulties, and grasping at every new idea, not only with the purpose of appropriating it, but also of developing it still further. Though it is only possible from the few isolated facts that exist to gain a general impression of the extraordinary activity displayed by Wolgemut throughout his long life of eighty-five years, still they leave no doubt that in him we

have to do with a great master, who was the pioneer in all those paths where Dürer reaped not only his own but also his teacher's fame. However highly Dürer's genius may be rated, it would never have reached its full perfection without Wolgemut. We have only to consider those great publications through which Wolgemut became the founder of the celebrated Nuremberg school of wood-engraving to show that this is the case beyond dispute.

When Anton Koburger, in 1483, prepared his edition of the Bible for Upper Germany, he borrowed the illustrations for it from the Cologne Bible, which had appeared ten years previously. However rough and imperfect the hundred and seven blocks which came to Nuremberg, they were enough to excite the enterprising minds of Koburger and Wolgemut, and urge them on to achieve something better. Animated with this spirit, they soon raised engraving on wood, which till then had been of the rudest nature and practised in a mechanical way, to the level of the art of that period. A comparison of the ninety-one large illustrations in that monument of art, the *Schatzbehalter des Reichthums des ewigen Heils und Seligkeit* ("Casket containing the Riches of Eternal Salvation and Happiness"), published by Koburger in 1491, with any of the woodcuts of a previous date will show how complete and rapid this progress was. The drawings are all by the same master hand, no doubt that of Wolgemut himself. It is easy to see how the manifold richness of conception and free modelling which they display were controlled by technical possibilities, and how entirely the execution, which is very unequal, was dependent on the degree of artistic skill possessed by the different engravers employed on the work.

What was the master's own ideal may be judged of from the more successful cuts, such, for instance, as the first, representing God the Father seated on a throne blessing

the kneeling Saviour. Here a carefully finished arrangement of draperies adds to the dignity of the cleverly grouped figures, and a few strokes suffice to give expression and play to the countenances; while the conception, though bold, not being beyond the intelligence and technical skill of the engraver, it is possible to form, even from his modified rendering, an idea of what the original drawing was. None of the woodcuts in the *Schatzbehalter* have any distinct signature. But the large illuminated W on the banner in the charming representation of the return of Jephthah, the nineteenth plate, can, as Passavant has suggested, be no other than Wolgemut's initial, as also the W on the small banner between two other banners, one with the letter A and the other with the letter Z, in the eightieth plate.*

The success which the woodcuts in the *Schatzbehalter* undoubtedly met with probably induced Sebald Schreyer and Sebastian Cammermeister to conclude an agreement on December 29, 1491 (the year in which these woodcuts appeared), with Michel Wolgemut and his stepson, Wilhelm Pleydenwurff, for another great undertaking, namely, the publication of the illustrated edition of Dr. Hartmann Schedel's *Neue Weltchronik* (New Universal Chronicle) or *Chronicon Norimbergense.* The two rich citizens supplied the funds for the execution of more than two thousand blocks; while the two painters, besides working very diligently, must have had a large studio at their disposal, for at the end of two years, on December 23, 1493, the work was completed. The original Latin text was translated into German, with the requisite alterations, by the *Losungsschreiber* George Alt, and Koburger brought it out in both languages. We may judge how large the circu-

* This may also be the case with the banner on the tent in plate 58; only the letter there has been cut short by the carver, as have also some of the inscriptions, *e.g.* the AVE MARIA GRA in plate 64.

lation of these folios must have been, not only from the number of copies still existing, but from a document in the town archives of Nuremberg, dated June 22, 1509, in which the partners render an account of the profits of their undertaking, and come to an arrangement as to the division of the considerable proceeds. Copies of the work were sent in all directions to different agents, not only in many German cities—such as Basle, Strassburg, Lübeck, Danzig, Breslau, Prague, and Vienna—but also in Paris, Lyons, Cracow, and Buda. It even had a great sale in Italy, especially at Como, Milan, Genoa, Florence, and Bologna, partly through the medium of the Nuremberg merchant Anton Kolb, and partly through a certain Peter Vischer—not to be confounded with the famous Nuremberg brassfounder of that name—who travelled about from town to town conducting the sale of it. In Nuremberg itself, the handsome folio volume, "in the rough," i.e. with uncoloured woodcuts and unbound, cost two Rhenish florins; bound and illuminated, three times that sum.

The publication of this Chronicle was an event in the history of printing, for it was the first great secular work which had ever been got up in such splendid style. The scholar and the artist had an equal share in the success of the book, which appealed in a special manner to the spirit of intellectual independence just beginning to show itself amongst the burghers, the educated middle class of the day; and, extravagant as much of it was, there is no doubt that, in the main, it did a great deal towards enlightening people, and freeing them from the spirit of the middle ages. There is a strange jumble of sacred and profane things in Hartmann Schedel's history, the author, following the example of the Italian humanists, in whose school he had studied, making the Bible and mythology go hand in hand together. This gave the painter a wide field for the exercise of his powers of invention; but the artistic execu-

tion suffered visibly from the haste with which the work was carried on, and towards the end the woodcuts are more and more wanting in finish. Wolgemut's creative power and crude imagination are fully displayed in the larger compositions, from the expressive representation of the expulsion from Paradise (folio 9) to the wild dance of the five skeletons in the picture of death (folio 264). The many repetitions of the same subjects may be attributed to Pleydenwurff and other assistants. In the ornamental and accessory work, though the old, or Gothic, style predominates, it at the same time lends itself to the introduction of natural objects and other novelties, at the caprice of the artist. The numerous views of towns to be found in the Chronicle are mostly imaginary, but the details in some of them are so characteristic that a quick eye can readily see they are done from sketches made on the spot. However imperfect, too, these views may appear to us, they are the first beginnings of independent landscape painting.* Wolgemut's interest in the subject appears often to have led him to begin by making a bit of scenery the chief point in his picture; and so absorbed did he become in his treatment of it that he ended by catching the true modern spirit of landscape painting, and producing a result in which all the charms of nature are reflected.

Though the names of Michel Wolgemut and Wilhelm Pleydenwurff are distinctly mentioned at the end of both editions of the Chronicle, the woodcuts bear no monogram or mark of any kind by which the two artists' work can be distinguished. It is therefore no more possible to form a distinct idea of what Wolgemut's actual achievements were from his woodcuts than from his paintings. To

* Putting aside the isolated examples which appeared in Breydenbach's *Reise nach Jerusalem* (1486) and Thoman Lyrar's or Lyrer's *Chronik von Schwaben*.

gain a clear conception of his greatness and individuality, we must turn to a third and no less important aspect of his artistic career, though it is one which in this century has been almost entirely denied him, viz. engraving on copper. Unlike his paintings and woodcuts, Wolgemut's copper engravings all bear a distinct mark. This difference is easily accounted for by the fact of the monogram having a mercantile value. Not only was the artist's sign-manual a protection to his goods, but the authorities probably required some mark to be placed on all art products publicly sold in the market, in order to facilitate the collection of the duty on the right of sale. Pictures painted to order by any well-known artist required no monogram, nor did woodcuts in books, which always bore the name of the printer or editor. But engravings which were sold at a low rate in the market, and at pilgrimages, church festivals, &c., could not so easily dispense with it. The plate was marked with the monogram before any copies were printed for sale; consequently the few impressions to be met with here and there with no signature are, no doubt, proof copies, and their great scarcity shows that they were not intended for the market.

Reasons, which the reader will find explained in Chapter VIII., in the account of Dürer's "Rivalry with Wolgemut," induce me to claim for Wolgemut and his studio most of the old German copper engravings signed at the bottom in the centre with a W, which, since the beginning of the century, have been attributed to the goldsmith Wenzel of Olmütz. It is true that in his engravings, as in his paintings and woodcuts, it is difficult to recognise Wolgemut's style. There is the same variety and inequality in the execution, and the same difference of treatment; all pointing again to the conclusion that he was at the head of a large studio, in which art was not the only object aimed at.

Copies from any works in vogue by other masters were engraved there, as well as his own original designs. These copies, however, never sink to the level of spiritless, monotonous, mechanical work, such as that of Israel van Mecken. Both in drawing and technique they betray the master's watchful eye and his rare perception of the capabilities of his material. Though the introduction of engraving on copper into Nuremberg is, without doubt, due to Wolgemut, it is impossible, with the information we at present possess, to give any accurate account of the nature and number of his works in that branch of art. Good old impressions of his engravings are so rare that it is extremely difficult to form a just opinion of him, or to criticise him fairly; but as the few that exist supply many important links in the development of his artistic career, we may venture, with the aid of certain authentic documents, to give some account of it.

According to the somewhat recent inscription on Dürer's portrait of him in the Pinakothek at Munich, Wolgemut would appear to have been born in 1434. Who his father was, or what trade he followed, it is impossible to say, as the Nuremberg burgher roll of the fifteenth century contains the names of many Wolgemuts. Nor is anything known of his master. It is, however, pretty clear that, after completing his studies, he passed a considerable time in the countries of the Rhine, where painting had, subsequent to the middle of the fifteenth century, taken a decided onward movement. The varied influences to which he was exposed during this period show themselves in his engravings on copper, though these were probably not completed till some time later. Take as an instance the engraving representing Lot and his daughters seated in a landscape under tall trees, which is after a picture of the Cologne school of

Stephan Lochner.* The head of the old man is vigorous, and he has a long nose; the daughters are dressed in the Rhenish costume of that day, with the front of the head shaved and high receding caps. The workmanship of the engraving is hard and bald, and shows, especially in the foliage, the hand of one who was accustomed to rely upon the effects produced by the tool of the wood-engraver. The same criticism applies to the engraving of the Last Supper,† with its short-bodied, large-headed figures seated at a round table, in which the monogram W is not engraved, but left white on a dark background. The composition bears a singular resemblance to the forty-seventh cut in the *Schatzbehalter*, where all the accessories appear to have been simplified in view of engraving on wood, while the architectural perspective in the background is like that in the twenty-fourth cut of the same work. The influence of the Cologne school is even more apparent in the St. Ursula,‡ which resembles the picture in the Cologne Museum; and in two other engravings, of greater technical excellence, representing the martyrdom of St. Andrew and of St. Bartholomew,§ which are exact copies of two of the twelve pictures on the inside of the wings of the altar-piece of St. Lawrence at Cologne, attributed by Passavant to Stephan himself, and by Schnaase ‖ and others to an imaginative pupil or contemporary of the same. These pictures are now in the Städel Institute at Frankfurt. Distinct traces of the Cologne school are also to be found in many of Wolgemut's woodcuts, and even in the illustrations in the Chronicle.

On the whole, however, this school had passed its prime, and had already given way to that of the van Eycks; and

* Bartsch, *Peintre-graveur*, vi. p. 319, No 1.

† Ibid. p. 324, No. 16.

‡ Passavant, *Peintre-graveur*, ii. p. 135, Nos. 70.

§ Bartsch, vi. Nos. 23, 25.

‖ *Geschichte der bildenden Kunst*, vi. p. 461.

the young Wolgemut may very possibly, while he was on the Rhine, have followed the stream of the new development to its fountain-head, and worked, like Dürer's father, with "the great artists of the Netherlands." Certain it is, at any rate, that some of his finest engravings are copied from the school of the van Eycks. Take, for instance, the charming lute-player, seated on the grass, with the high Burgundian cap and fur-trimmed dress falling in sharply defined folds. Above her, on a small tree, is perched a parrot; and over their heads is a scroll, with the inscription, "Och mich verlanget zir, do gros min libes lieb, noch dir, dos geloub mir vor wor."* The dress and the conception of the figure are decidedly Flemish, but the language of the inscription proves that the engraver belonged to Upper Germany. The delicacy and finish of Wolgemut's technical handling are especially conspicuous in his successful reproductions of the engravings by the so-called "Master of 1480," or "of the Amsterdam Cabinet," such as the Two Lovers seated,† the Turkish Family,‡ and the Old Man tamed by a Young Wife, with the inscription "NESEL."§ These plates are faithful copies of well-known originals by that most important engraver of the van Eyck school, and completely render his delicate shading by means of little strokes as fine as hairs. Wolgemut's firm touch in carrying out this master's peculiar method of working with the dry point shows that there was probably some personal intercourse between them, for nothing in the practice of art is less capable of indirect transmission than a technical process.

But Wolgemut adhered far less closely to the Flemish style than to that originally introduced by Rogier van der

* "Ah, how I long for thee, my own best-loved one, believe me on my word." Bartsch, vi. p. 343. Passavant, ii. p. 134.

† Bartsch, vi. No. 48.

‡ Passavant, ii. p. 136, No. 73.

§ "Donkey"; she is riding on his back. Passavant, ii. p. 136, No. 74.

Weyden, and afterwards prevalent on the Upper Rhine. When he first began his journeyings, the studio of the celebrated master, E. S., of the year 1466, must have been already flourishing. Great works were executed there on small surfaces. Though the sentiment of the old style was not yet extinguished, and there is apparent in this older Suabian school a certain weak sentimentality inherited from the Cologne school, still there is something delightfully fresh and natural in the treatment of the slender, delicate figures dressed in the costume of the Netherlands. In two of his engravings, the master, E. S., simply borrows compositions by Rogier van der Weyden. This school has left very few carefully executed pictures, for it confined itself almost exclusively to engraving on copper; even Martin Schongauer, of Colmar, who may be considered its most distinguished follower, devoting himself chiefly to that branch of art. Though Schongauer could scarcely have been ten years older than Wolgemut, the uniform merit of his numerous plates shows how rapidly his talent was developed, and at what an early age he reached his highest point of excellence. His fixedness of purpose must have given him a great advantage over the speculative Nuremberg painter. That they came into contact with one another in the course of the latter's travels is evident, not only from his frequent adoption of Schongauer's manner, but also from his close adherence both in painting and engraving to the technical process employed by that master. This accounts for the admirable copies by Wolgemut of Schongauer's engravings, many of them equal to the originals; as, for instance, the first of the woodcuts in the *Schatzbehalter*, representing Jesus before the Throne of the Father.*

* Bartsch, No. 72.

The earliest paintings attributed with any certainty to Wolgemut are the four great wings of an altar-piece from the Church of the Holy Trinity at Hof, now in the Pinakothek at Munich (1st Room, Nos. 22, 27, 34, 39). They are well preserved, and painted on both sides, and represent Christ on the Mount of Olives, St. Michael killing the dragon, the Crucifixion,* the Annunciation, the Descent from the Cross, the Resurrection, the Adoration of the infant Saviour, and the apostles St. Bartholomew and St. James standing side by side. Only the last two have a gold background; and these probably formed the outer part of the closed altar, of which the centre was no doubt a piece of sculpture. Over the figures of the apostles is the inscription, "nach Christi geburt MCCCCLXV iar ist dis werck gesatzt worden."† A sober and serious spirit is manifest in the treatment of these sacred subjects. The figures are spare without being slender, the heads oval, the noses long and pointed, the eyes small, but well-shaped; the chins softly rounded, and sometimes dimpled. There is a certain charm about the faces of the women, while the men's heads are full of dignity; that of Christ in particular having an expression of terrible earnestness, modified, however, by the shortening of the lower part of the face. Although the leanness of the limbs reminds us of Schongauer, the expression of the face is altogether more manly, more vigorous, and grander. Inscriptions in gold letters are introduced, issuing from the lips of the side figures, who are dressed in the gay costume of the times. The draperies fall in angular, gaily coloured folds of bright red and green, dark blue-green, and violet-

* A large finished pen sketch in the National Museum at Pesth closely resembles this composition; it is of the same date, and doubtless by the same hand.

† "This work was executed in the year MCCCCLXV after the birth of Christ."

grey and purple, varied by an occasional bit of gold brocade with large pomegranate pattern. The flesh tones have delicate grey shadows, sometimes tinged with pink. The tints are clear and liquid, and tenderly blended together; the outlines being much less hard than in other Upper German paintings of that date. A peculiar delight in nature, and in the purely sensuous charm of colour, pervades the whole composition; and there is something very pleasing in the clear, sunny landscape with its airy distance, its limpid water, and its foreground of luxuriant grass dotted here and there with flowers, so carefully and accurately painted that it is easy to recognise among them the ranunculus, the cammock, the primrose, and the borage. Many of the illustrations in the *Schatzbehalter* recall in dress, type of face, and massive foliage, these early paintings of Wolgemut's. The short-bodied, stiff figures and the dark colouring of the dresses are an inheritance of the old Nuremberg style; while the broken folds of the draperies and the delicate enamel-like painting of the flesh are a dowry of the Flemish and Upper Rhenish schools.

On his return home, Wolgemut transplanted the van Eyck influence to Nuremberg, where the new style of painting offered a sharp contrast to the old, and occasioned a schism amongst the Nuremberg painters that was prolonged into the sixteenth century. Whilst one party worked on quietly in the softer and more agreeable manner of the old style, which gradually became more and more monotonous and empty till it entirely died out, Wolgemut's realism exerted a fruitful influence on the other side; the natural result of a collision between these two opposing tendencies in art being that the more austere, rugged, and thoughtful gained the ascendency over the more pleasing and sentimental. In 1473, the same year that Schongauer completed his only authenticated picture, the Virgin in the Rose Bower,

at Colmar, Wolgemut's name appears for the first time in the burgher roll of Nuremberg, taking the place of that of Hans Pleydenwurff. From all that is known, Pleydenwurff seems to have been a painter of some repute in Nuremberg. As early as 1451, and from 1463 till his death in 1472,* we find him living in the house numbered 496 on the St. Sebald's side of the town, which afterwards passed into the possession of Wolgemut through the latter's marriage with Barbara, Pleydenwurff's widow. It is possible that Wolgemut had previously worked under Pleydenwurff, who might in that case be regarded as his master. At any rate, if the Hof altar was painted at Nuremberg, it must have been done in Pleydenwurff's studio, and on his account. Even after his marriage, Wolgemut carried on the business in partnership with the family of Pleydenwurff. One of his three stepsons, Wilhelm, whom he brought up as a painter, and who shared in the work of illustrating Schedel's Chronicle, is entered on the burgher roll from 1490 to 1494 as "master."† The death of this Wilhelm Pleydenwurff is referred to in a contract between Wolgemut and his wife, dated the 4th of February 1495, and at the same time it is stated that during his lifetime he had received every kindness from them both. He left a widow named Helena, who afterwards married one Simon Zwelffer, and a daughter Magdalena. Helena Pleydenwurff's name appears with that of Wolgemut in the rate-books of 1495, a sign that she still carried on the business of her deceased husband. She was the daughter of the apothecary Dominicus Mülich, for whose orphan family Wolgemut had for a short time acted as guardian. From this charge, as well as the general care of the family affairs, he was released on the 4th of August 1501 by a

* Frommann, *Anzeiger für Kunst der Vorzeit*, 1871, p. 11. Lochner, ibid. 1871, p. 278.

† Murr, *Journal*, ii. pp. 31 and 134 et seq.; xv. p. 23 et seq.

deed in which mention is made of a child, "Hänslein Mülich, son of the late Dominicus Mülich," who can be none other than the afterwards well-known Munich court painter, Hans Mielich or Mülich; for the family, as good Catholics, subsequently left Nuremberg, probably for Munich.

The burden which the care and education of his step-children imposed upon Wolgemut appears to have been the chief cause of the hurried and consequently superficial manner in which he worked. Evidences of this haste and want of care are seen in the great altar-piece of the Haller Chapel in the Church of the Holy Cross at Nuremberg, and still more so in the altar-piece of the Frauenkirche, at Zwickau, in Saxony; for which Wolgemut received the order in 1479.* Another early work is the altar-piece, given by a nun of the Landauer family; one part of the wings of this work is now in the Augsburg Gallery, and the other part in the Pinakothek at Munich.†

Wolgemut's most important pictures are, without doubt, the four panels now in the Chapel of St. Maurice at Nuremberg, originally forming the wings of the high-altar of St. Augustine's Church, or the Schusterkirche (Church of the Shoemakers), completed in 1488, and now pulled down. This altar-piece is the only one of his works that is noticed by Neudörffer and Sandrart, who incidentally remark that the name of the donor was Sebald Peringsdörffer. The centre was formed of carved wooden figures of the Virgin and two saints. On the outside of the wings are represented, in couples, full life-size figures of St. George and St. Sebald, St. Catharine and St. Barbara, St. Rosalia and St. Margaret, St. John the Baptist and St. Nicolas. They

* Quandt, *Die Gemälde des M. Wolgemut in der Frauenkirche zu Zwickau;* and Waagen, *Kunstwerke und Künstler in Deutschland*, i. pp. 63 and 283.

† R. Marggraff, *Katalog der k. Gemälde-Gallerie in Augsburg*, Nos. 42 and 43. *Katalog der ält. königl. Pinakothek zu München*, 2nd Room, No. 82.

stand on star-shaped or polygonal corbels, supported by black and gold foliage interwined in Gothic fashion, and ending in fantastically ornamented capitals. At the point from which this foliage springs are little figures of animals, wild men, and children. On the ground itself are numbers of wild flowers, such as clover, columbine, lilies, chicory, and campanulas, most carefully executed, and interspersed with insects and butterflies. The figures of the saints, standing out clear against a blue ground, are amongst the grandest productions of early German art. Their proportions are slender; the heads of the male saints full of dignity, those of the female ones peculiarly tender and graceful. Notwithstanding the great size, the execution is highly finished; the distemper colours are well blended, and everywhere clear and bright; the flesh tints are rosy in the light, and greenish in the half-shadows; and there is nothing flat about the heads, or the somewhat small, narrow hands. The brocaded or otherwise richly coloured dresses and the gold-embroidered cloaks over them hang in magnificent folds; the shadows in the cloaks being chiefly laid on with broad black cross-lines such as are employed in copper and wood engravings of a later date.

The paintings on the inside of the wings are somewhat deeper in tone, and here and there highly effective in colouring. On each panel are two pictures, one over the other, representing dramatic scenes from the legend of St. Vitus, to whom the church was dedicated, and episodes from the lives of other saints. In the Scourging of St. Vitus, the upper part of the youthful naked body is in good proportion, without being too anatomically precise. St. Luke, in his chamber, painting the Virgin in blue and gold draperies, forcibly reminds us, not only in its subject, but in its conception and effect, of the van Eyck school. The St. Sebastian is particularly soft in treatment, and

correct and free in the rendering of the nude; but the feet are rather too broad at the extremities, and the face is somewhat too elongated and pointed. The representation of St. Vitus refusing the betrothal ring is charming. The rejected bride, clad in light green, the favourite colour of the Nuremberg women, is a picture of tender grace, beauty, and dignity, such as we rarely meet with in the Upper German school; and in her oval face, with its broad forehead and long nose we can again trace the van Eyck influence. Here, as in the St. Vitus in the lions' den, the heads are so noble, and the colouring so warm, that there can be no question of apprentices having had any hand in the work. The only things showing a want of observation of nature are the small, poodle-like lions; but this is easily explained. On the other hand, the landscape, in which St Bernard is being embraced by the crucified Saviour, with its Franconian log-huts reflected in the water, is peculiarly pleasing and bright in colour. The St. Christopher, too, with the distant river, rivalling in brightness the water in a Memling background, the foreground adorned with reeds, lizards, shells, &c., and the soft and rounded form of the beautiful infant Christ whom the saint carries in his arms, is charmingly natural. The ship seen on the right of this picture is an object frequently introduced by Wolgemut into his works.

Two other pieces appear to have formed part of the Peringsdörffer altar; one a predella, now detached from the wings, and the other a composition representing St. Vitus called upon by heathen priests to worship idols. This last is by the hand of a pupil, and bears the signature R. F. and the date 1487. Whose initials these are is unknown,* but

* Waagen, *Kunstwerke in Deutschland*, i. pp. 213, 216; Retberg, *Nürnbergs Kunstleben*, p. 68. It can no longer be said that this is the monogram of Kaspar Rosenthaler, for we now know that this Nuremberger was

the date helps to fix the period at which the Peringsdörffer altar was painted, for the Church of St. Augustine was completed in the following year (1488). Like the *Schatzbehalter*, this altar-piece was executed during Dürer's apprenticeship with Wolgemut (1486–1489). Consequently Wolgemut was at the height of his productiveness while Dürer was with him, and did more himself with his own hand than at any other time.

As his stepson, Wilhelm Pleydenwurff, grew up, and could help him in the studio, Wolgemut appears to have been relieved to some extent from business cares. Had this respite, which unfortunately was of short duration, lasted longer, it would have been easier to follow without hindrance the progress both of his technique and style. When Pleydenwurff's aid failed him, he bestowed all his care and attention on portraits, as is proved by the characteristic heads in his altar-pieces. The Imhoff inventory of 1573 mentions "a small oil picture by Wolgemut, of a woman in an old-fashioned peasant's cap," or, as it is called in the inventory of 1580, a "star-shaped cap." * Amongst existing examples of Wolgemut's portrait-painting, the first place must, in my opinion, be given to a very remarkable Nuremberg picture in the Royal Gallery at Cassel, attributed to Burgkmair.† It represents a woman with a large white head-dress, and a green dress with a gold girdle, holding a carnation in her hand; above is the inscription, "VRSVLA HANS TVCHERIN." She is the second wife of Hans Tucher, who died in 1491; her maiden name being Harssdörffer. The character of the inscription, the dress, and the mode of

a merchant and bookseller at Schwaz, in the Tyrol, and certainly not a painter. See Schönherr, *Mittheilungen der Wiener Central-Commission*, x. p. xxiv.

* Springer, *Mittheilungen der Wiener Central-Commission*, v. 356.

† No. 16 in the catalogue. Bode, *Galerie zu Cassel*, Leipzig, 1872, p. 4, attributes the picture to Schongauer.

painting, all confirm the genuineness of the date 1478, which is hidden by the frame. It may serve to fix the year in which Ursula was married.* She died, childless, in 1504. The whole picture is immensely attractive, and charmingly treated. The colours have not changed in the least, and are delightfully clear and liquid, and almost more delicate than those of Rogier van der Weyden. The head is exquisitely modelled, and the drawing of the hands wonderfully finished. But, notwithstanding, the general treatment of form and the tone of colouring betray the more vigorous taste of the Upper German school. When Herr Otto Mündler, after having spoken in similar terms of this picture, asks, "Who could have painted such a work at that time in Nuremberg? Schongauer alone could have done it" —I can only reply, having regard to what has been already stated, "It must have been Michel Wolgemut, at the climax of those artistic powers of which he soon gave further proof in the Peringsdörffer altar-piece."

At this height, however, he did not remain for much more than ten years, as is proved by three portraits painted by him twenty years later for the same family. Originally there were four of these portraits. They represented the two stepsons of Ursula Tucher and their wives, viz.: Niklas Tucher, born 1464, died 1521, and his wife, Elisabeth Puschin, married 1491; Hans Tucher, born 1456, died 1536, and his wife, Felicitas Rieterin, married 1482, died 1514. Only the three last portraits have been preserved; that of Elisabeth at Cassel,† the two others in the museum at Weimar.‡ In

* Biedermann, *Geschlechtsregister des Patriziats zu Nürnberg*, Bayreuth, 1784, pl. DXI., where the marriage is entered under the date 1481.

† No. 7 in the catalogue. There is a wood engraving of it in reverse in a work called the *Galerie zu Cassel*, p. 5. See the *Zeitschrift für bild. Kunst*, vi. p. 185.

‡ Nos. 55 and 56 in the catalogue of 1869. Both are attributed to Dürer, whose monogram has been put on the Cassel picture. The head of the woman at Weimar has been completely re-painted.

contrast with the cool, enamel-like surface so noticeable in the portrait of the stepmother, the painting in these pictures is fluid, thin, and too bright-hued; the backgrounds especially are broadly treated and vivid in colouring, and, instead of the old manner of preparing the ground in tempera, we find a skilful but lighter method in oil. The sharp, pinched faces have little that is attractive about them, but they appeal to us by the convincing truthfulness of detail with which they are executed. On the clasps which the two women wear on their breasts are inserted the initials of their respective husbands, N. T. and H. T.; and underneath, on the front of their bodices, appears, as if embroidered, a double W, probably indicating Wolgemut's name. The letters M. H. I. M. N. S. K. on the head-band of Elizabeth Tucher no doubt, too, have some meaning, as Wolgemut was fond of introducing in this way, as a special mark of his own, the initials of names and proverbs, a remnant of the bygone mottoes on scrolls.

A large pen drawing, bought by Herr B. Suermondt in 1865 at the Andréossy sale in Paris, seems to me to have been a partial sketch for an altar, similar to the Peringsdörffer one. On the left wing, standing on a console under a Gothic canopy, is a most carefully executed colossal figure of a richly draped saint, with arms crossed on the breast and sorrowful expression. The right wing contains in the upper part a slight sketch of St. Peter attacking Malchus, and in the lower a Crucifixion, a double arrangement very usual on the inner side of a wing. The grandeur of the conception in this drawing, combined with a touch of antique grace, shows that it can only be referred to Wolgemut's later style. As the drawing was amongst General Andréossy's Vienna booty, there is little difficulty in concluding that it once belonged to Dürer, especially as on the back is written, in his handwriting,

"*vm zwen weis pfening*," * recording probably the price he paid for this to him valuable drawing of his master.† Wolgemut's drawings are quite unknown, and have still to be discovered. The first thing to be done by any one who undertakes the task is to examine all that are signed with a W; as, for instance, those in the Albertina, carefully drawn on both sides of a prepared piece of paper with silver point, and washed with bistre, representing on one side the profile of a lean old man, and on the other five studies of hands; and that in the British Museum of an Adoration of the Shepherds, with landscape, dated 1514.‡

Evidence of a further development in Wolgemut's style is seen in the altar-shrine of the Margrave Frederick IV. of Brandenburg in the Convent Church at Heilsbronn. Waagen thinks this superior to anything of the painter's he has ever seen; for not only is there all the transparent colouring peculiar to Wolgemut in the extremely noble heads of the chief personages, but the other figures are more varied, the portraits more life-like and individual, the children's figures more rounded, and the disposal of the draperies more plain and simple, than in other pictures from his hand. Looking to the probable age of the members of the founder's family portrayed in this work, Waagen fixes its date at shortly before the year 1500.§

Directly after this we find Wolgemut occupied with an important order, namely, for the decoration of the so-called "*Huldigungssaal*" ("Hall of Allegiance") in the town-hall at Goslar. Here the four large middle compartments of the

* "For two white [silver] pfennigs."

† From this drawing, ascribed to Dürer himself, was painted the crude and spurious picture of a Mater Dolorosa, in the Munich Pinakothek (Cab. viii. No. 153), signed with a monogram, and dated 1515. The inscription, "1512 C. A.," on the drawing itself, was no doubt added later.

‡ Waagen, *Treasures of Art*, iv. p. 35. Because this drawing exhibits what is called the fully developed style of Dürer, we must not reject the possibility of its being Wolgemut's.

§ Waagen, *Kunstwerke in Deutschland*, i. p. 307.

ceiling remind us of his earlier compositions in the *Schatzbehalter*. They represent the Annuneiation, the Nativity, the Adoration of the Magi, and the Presentation in the Temple. The side eompartments eontain sitting figures of the Prophets and Evangelists. On the walls, amid rich Gothie earving, are portraits of the emperors, and figures of the sibyls, with scrolls fluttering about them. The Tiburtine sibyl resembles the Venus in Dürer's plate of the Doctor's Dream, both in the elongated type of faee and in the peeuliarly expressive attitude; at least so far as a figure dressed in the costume of the day admits of eomparison with a nude figure. These numerous paintings are done in distemper on eanvas, and are warm and bright in eolour. As a mark of appreeiation of his skill, "Mekel Wolgemoet" was made, in 1501, an honorary burgher of Goslar, and a member of the guild of brewers.* It may here be mentioned that there existed at Nuremberg at this time another family of the name of Wolgemut, who were merehants, and eame from Goslar, but no eonneetion has been traced between them and the painter. †

The last and best authentieated altar-pieee from Wolgemut's studio is that over the high-altar in the parish church of Sehwabach, eompleted in 1508. The carving in the eentre represents Christ and the Virgin enthroned between the two patron saints of the church, St. John the Baptist and St. Martin of Tours; angels hover over their heads, and above are three canopies in the most florid Late Gothie taste. The middle compartments of all Wolgemut's altar-pieces eonsisted originally of figures carved in wood in high relief, with bulging draperies, riehly gilded or painted in elaborate brocade patterns. In these earvings the figures

* According to J. M. Kratz, whose researches are utilised in an article by Mithoff, in the *Archiv für Niedersachsens Kunstgeschichte*, part iii. p. 33 et seq., with illustrations.

† Lochner, *Personennamen*, p. 29.

are slender and graceful, and the faces, though uniform and round, are delicately painted; while the women have that childlike, innocent look which is characteristic of the old Cologne school. The whole work was the product of an antiquated stationary art which remained untouched by all the progressive changes of style, and became petrified in its old forms; while its former deeper and more spiritual element entirely disappeared. Nothing, in fact, could form a more glaring contrast to the side-wings of Wolgemut's altars than these antiquated wood carvings. But tradition, as well as the taste of patrons, held fast to the old conventional type of devotional picture. Even to this day, in the Franconian districts, the favourite representations of the Virgin still exhibit the round, childish faces of the old style. The general arrangement and gilding and painting of these central figures were probably superintended by the painter; but his art, though it had long been the leading one, was practically excluded from the place of honour in the altar-piece, and was obliged to content itself with decorating the two, four, or six side-wings, as the case might be.*

At Schwabach, even the inner sides of the extreme pair of wings as well as the steps of the altar are covered with high reliefs, which, though carefully executed, differ little from earlier sculptures of the same kind. On the other hand, the paintings on the remaining wings present a marked contrast to Wolgemut's earlier works. The exe-

* The joint practice of the arts of wood-carving and painting in Nuremberg may be inferred from a regulation of the Nuremberg town council, by which, "at the request of the master painters and wood-carvers," an artist who was not a burgher of the town was forbidden to set up a studio or take public orders. Baader, *Beiträge*, ii. 25. The old burgher rolls of the fourteenth century frequently describe an artist as "carver and painter," while those of the fifteenth century reverse the order, and call him "painter and carver."

cution, it is true, is unequal, showing that his pupils had a large share in the work, but the composition is certainly Wolgemut's, and affords us an insight into his latest style. On the outsides of the wings are two colossal figures of the church's patron saints. That of St. John the Baptist, on the left, is a most powerful representation. He is standing with the left foot firmly advanced, and the right hand pointing to a not very well drawn figure of a lamb lying in front of him, while the left, with the fingers spread out in a peculiar manner—often seen in Dürer's works—holds together a fluttering red robe, the big folds of which almost conceal the traditional sheepskin. The strong, large-made limbs, the elongated head, the extremely prominent nose, and the thick curly hair and beard, all combine to produce the impression of indomitable physical strength—a quality which the painter seems to set great value on. On the right wing is an almost full-face representation of St. Martin of Tours, mounted on a rather stiff and ill drawn white horse, in the act of sharing his large red cloak with a crouching beggar on the right. The composition corresponds with the woodcut erroneously attributed to Dürer,* but which may from this resemblance be ascribed to Wolgemut. The year 1506, inscribed on a stone below in the centre, is important in relation to the date at which the altar was erected. In the execution of small details, this picture is inferior to the St. John the Baptist. There is not in it the same loving care displayed in the painting of the clouds, the steep rocks on the right, and the yellow iris in the foreground, as is evident in the treatment of the whole landscape in the other, where the foliage, the distant Jordan, the island surrounded by its greenish white waters, the towers, and the blue, peaked mountains, all testify to a

* Bartsch, Appendix No. 18. Dürer's monogram was inserted at a later period.

diligent study of nature. We notice the same thing in the smaller pictures on the inside of the wings, in the Preaching of the Baptist, for instance, and the Baptism of Christ, where the banks of the river fade and lose themselves in the distance in beautiful gradations of colour, and the nude figure of the Saviour is particularly well-shaped and rounded. The three figures sitting on their graves in winding-sheets, whom St. Martin, as bishop, has raised from the dead, witness, even in their weak points, to the diligent use of the living model. Setting aside the conventional representations of the life and passion of Jesus, the master treats the subjects in a perfectly free and independent manner. Very distinctive of him, too, and of the progress he made, are a better rendering of the human form and a more correct perspective; while the depth of observation displayed in the most passing incidents in some of his compositions is especially worthy of note. Take, for instance, the scene after the beheading of the Baptist, where Herodias is seen in the foreground bringing in the head on a charger. Full of loathing, one of the guests leaves the banqueting-hall; the king himself has risen horror-struck; the queen alone sits on in manifest indifference, while a page casts a scrutinising glance at her. The way in which all these various subjects are worked together so as to form one whole is quite modern in its dramatic effect. At the same time, the representation is entirely devoid of any of the traditional religious accessories. The dresses, and all the surrounding details, are copied exactly from life; Herodias sweeps in in hat and feathers, with a red train trimmed with gold, which she holds up slightly with her elbow, like the lady in Dürer's engraving of The Promenade.

So far as we can judge of the original condition of the pictures of the Schwabach altar before they were painted over by Rotermund in 1817, a change had at this time

taken place, not only in Wolgemut's drawing and composition, but also in his method of painting. The colours are in general more heavy, and the local tone of the flesh is of a brownish hue, while the lights on it are more strongly contrasted than in his earlier works. The use of oil colours seems to have become general. The execution, it is true, is so varied and unequal that clearly several other hands must have had a share in the work. Chief among them was, most likely, Hans Schäufelein. The frequent use of a bluish, broken, white tint in the shadows at once recalls him to us, and the women in the picture of the Crucifixion are unmistakably of his favourite and rather unmeaning type. Longinus the centurion and the youthful personage with the noble profile beside him in a red dress with slashed sleeves, and a sword at his side, are powerful figures, which display all the overweening pride of self-sufficiency. Both Mantegna and Dürer were fond of introducing figures of soldiers like these into their foregrounds. The back of this altar-piece is also deserving of notice. The white ground is entirely overlaid with green ornamental work, painted in distemper. In the centre is a sort of genealogical tree of Christ, with half-length figures of St. Joachim and St. Anna at the foot, and above a twining ornament of scrollwork, like that in some of the large woodcuts of the Schedel Chronicle, in the middle of which stands a small, graceful figure of the Madonna; in the corners above are floating angels. The backs of the side wings are also covered with Gothic ornamentation, into which birds of different kinds are introduced; a sort of work in which Wolgemut excelled, and in which he took evident delight, the figures in it especially often showing a fine feeling for gracefulness and plastic perfection.

Wolgemut was seventy-four years of age when the Schwabach altar-piece left his studio, the order for it having

probably been received soon after the completion of the church, in 1495. No doubt, the work took a considerable time to execute, but it does not appear to have progressed with the desired speed, as a stipulation was exacted in 1507 that it was to be ready for the consecration of the church in the following year. At the same time the municipality was careful to provide that the excellence of the work should not suffer from the pressure put upon the painter, for the agreement says: "Should the panels, in any one or more places, be ill done, he shall alter and improve them, until after careful inspection, instituted for the purpose by both parties, they shall be declared well done; but should they be so unsightly as to be beyond the possibility of improvement, then he shall keep them himself, and return the money already received, without diminution or loss." * The altar-piece was duly set up on the appointed day in 1508, and the stipulated sum of 600 florins paid to the master besides a present of 10 florins to his wife.† Supposing that a good deal remained to be done during this last year, or that even alterations were required, the large share of pupils in the work would be fully explained. One of these assistants may have been Dürer's younger brother Hans. At least, Dürer, writing to Pirkheimer, in 1506, from Venice, twice sends his mother a message, desiring her "to speak to Wolgemut about giving him work;" a sign, too, that Dürer was always on friendly terms with his master.

The important orders that flowed in on Wolgemut from all sides show the reputation in which his studio was held far and wide. The sums, too, paid him for his altar-pieces were, for those days, very considerable, and far

* Meusel, *Neue Miscellaneen*, iv. p. 476.

† J. G. Maurer, *Chronicon Swabacense*, 1756, p. 90.

beyond anything that Dürer ever received for his paintings. For instance, for the Zwickau altar-piece, Wolgemut got no less than 1400 Rhenish florins. Schedel's Chronicle, at the settling of accounts, on the 22nd June 1509, was worth to each of the two partners 98 florins in cash, 149 florins in copies they themselves had taken, and 621 florins in outstanding orders; and there were besides a number of unsold copies, to be equally divided between them. Taking into consideration the number of his works, only a part of which are known and have been preserved, it is astonishing that he should not have possessed more property than he is authentically proved to have had. What is more, his income seems rather to have diminished than otherwise in his later years. As has been already said, Michel Wolgemut, in Dürer's boyhood, lived in and owned the Pleydenwurff house in the Unter der Vesten, now numbered 496. There are documents to prove that he still owned this house in 1479 and 1490; but on the 10th June 1493 he disposed of it to Bartholomaeus Egen, and bought the neighbouring corner-house, No. 497, belonging to the tailor Hans Gerstner, opposite the Schildröhre. How long he kept possession of this is not known, but, like the other, it became the property of the Egens, for we find them selling it on the 7th December 1507. From that time the Nuremberg archives are silent on the subject of Wolgemut's fortunes, though his name continues to appear every year on the burgher rolls up to his death in 1519.*

* No grounds have been discovered for the very improbable supposition—improbable, at least, so long as 1434 is accepted as the date of his birth (though, be it said, without any authentic proof)—that the Michel Wolgemut whose children, in 1552, were still under the guardianship of the goldsmith Jobst Eyssler was our Wolgemut, and that the painter's widow Christina Wolgemut, mentioned still later, was his second wife. It seems more likely that the above was a painter of the same name who died at Krems in 1530, and whose mother and relations at Nuremberg there-

There is no reason to suppose that any other master but Michel Wolgemut exercised a decisive influence upon Dürer's early development. One old Nuremberg painter however, whose memory Dürer always revered, should not be forgotten, namely, Hans Traut, who is mentioned in the burgher roll of 1477, and is said afterwards to have become blind.* Dürer had a large pen sketch of St. Sebastian by him, hatched and slightly washed with colour, the relief of which is very good. The saint stands tied to a tree on an octagon-shaped pedestal; he has a rather long head, with a smiling, youthful-looking countenance, and highly arched eyebrows; the hands are large, and the feet long-toed, but otherwise the anatomy is good, and the whole execution admirable. Under the drawing, which is now in the library of Erlangen University, Dürer wrote, "*Dz hatt Hans Trawt zw Nornmerchkg gemacht*" ("Hans Traut did this at Nuremberg"). A series of pictures from the life of St. Vitus, two of which are in the Germanische Museum, and the rest in the northern aisle of St. Lawrence's Church, would seem to be by this painter,† who appears from his work to have been a moderate follower of Wolgemut's style, though not so sharply separated as the latter from the earlier Nuremberg school.

How closely Dürer adhered, whilst a pupil, to his master's style of composition is shown by two pen drawings done towards the end of his apprenticeship in 1489, a date about which there is no dispute. They are the earliest authentic specimens of his own invention and composition.

upon claimed his inheritance. See Baader, *Jahrbücher für Kunstw.* i. p. 225; *Beiträge*, ii. p. 42. Loehner, *Personennamen*, takes a contrary view, pp. 28, 29.

* Baader, *Beiträge*, i. p. 2. Neudörffer, *Nachrichten*, p. 39.

† If this supposition is correct, the question arises whether these pictures did not form part of a series which Hans Traut painted for the cloisters in the Augustine convent, and which are said to have been burnt there in the year 1816.

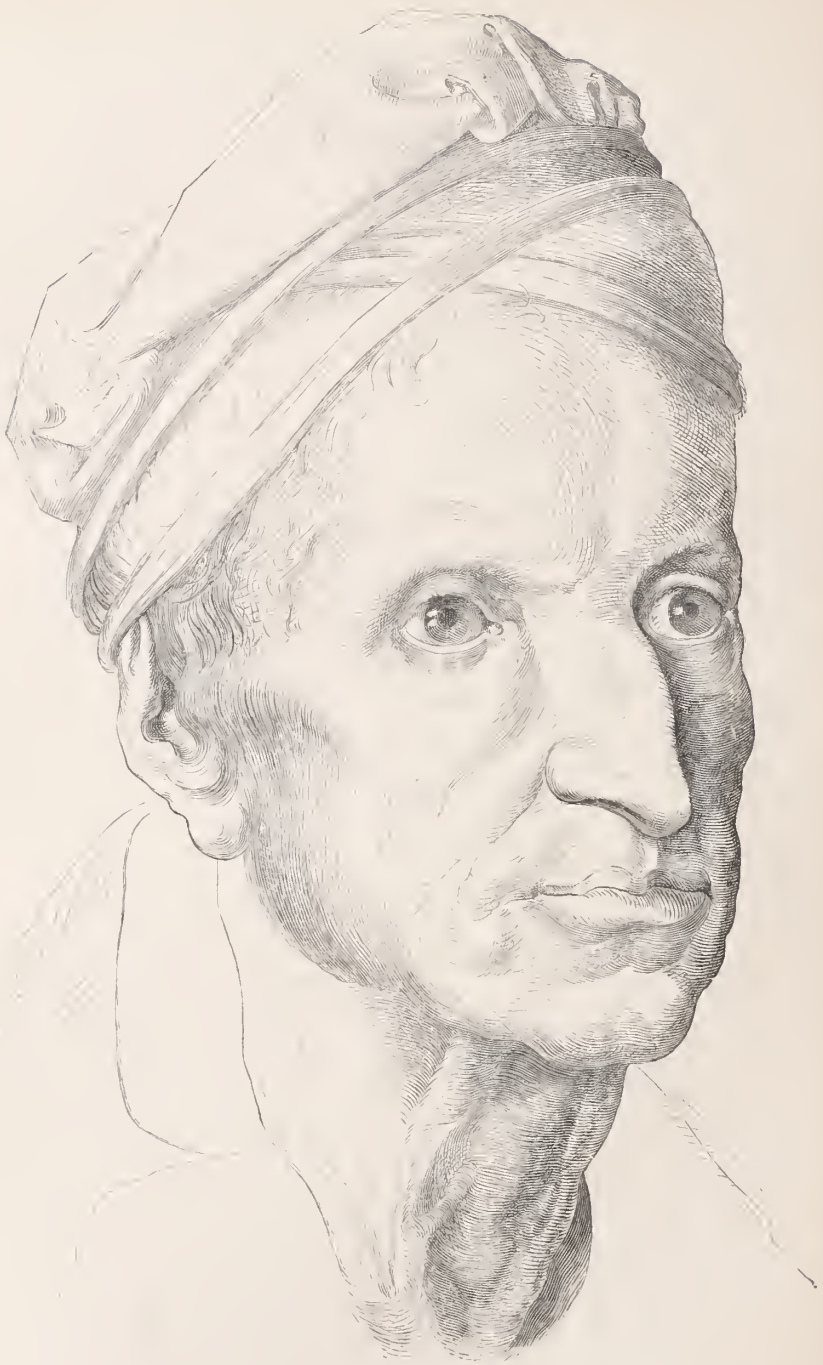
Both subjects are secular. That in the Kunsthalle at Bremen* represents six horsemen marching in good order through a narrow pass, in front of which a wide landscape opens out on the left. In the distance is a town, which the foremost rider, as he catches sight of it, salutes with a gesture of his right hand. He and the two who immediately follow him have already turned the corner, and are seen from behind. What the composition is intended to represent is doubtful, but the grouping, the way the town is sketched in, and even the faulty drawing of the horses, all answer to the character which the preparatory sketches for Wolgemut's woodcuts must have had. The same may be said of another drawing, also done in 1489, which was engraved by Prestel, in 1780, when it was in the Praun Cabinet at Nuremberg; it has since formed part of the Posonyi† and Hullot collections, and is now in the Berlin Museum. It represents three foot soldiers leaning on their spears, and engaged in a lively conversation. Notwithstanding an evident attempt to give a sense of freedom of action to the powerful figures cased in the close-fitting dress of the time, there is a stiffness about them and a fixed, rigid look in their savage faces and large round eyes which show a lack of anatomical knowledge no effort of the artist has been able to make up for. The abandonment of the symmetrical formality of the old style has not been compensated for by a sufficient study of nature.‡ These groups of two or three foot soldiers were, as we shall see, a favourite subject of the Nuremberg school at that time.

The admirable portrait of Wolgemut that Dürer has bequeathed to us is the best testimony to his having remained

* Heller, p. 126, No. 28.

† No. 307 in the catalogue.

‡ There is no ground for saying that this drawing represents the chiefs of the Rütli confederacy.



PORTRAIT OF MICHEL WOLGEMUT.

(*From the Chalk Drawing in the Albertina at Vienna.*)

To face p. 92, Vol. I.

in personal intercourse with his master, and preserved his regard for him, until he died. According to the inscription on this portrait, which is in the Pinakothek at Munich, Michel Wolgemut died before sunrise on the 30th November 1519, just thirty years, therefore, after Dürer had completed his studies under him. His grateful pupil, who was to survive him only eight years and four months, painted this portrait probably from the drawing in the Albertina, the date of which must have been about 1516. The drawing, of which we give a reproduction, is far superior to the painting in delicacy and liveliness of treatment. The head, nearly life-size, is in black chalk, slightly heightened with white, on blue Venetian paper with a yellow tinge. Notwithstanding his eighty-two years, Wolgemut shows no trace of the feebleness of old age. The high forehead and large eye bespeak the active mind, and the sharp aquiline nose and broad projecting chin also tell of a restless industry, not, however, unmingled, as the lips betray, with a touch of gentleness. If his face was as Dürer portrays it for us, clearly Wolgemut had not yet consigned himself to inactivity. What it was, however, that led him, in his old age, to adopt the decisive change of style that marked the last stage of his development is a very difficult matter for us to determine. People have found it easier to ignore the existence of any change altogether, or to account for it by something still more unlikely. Thus some have pretended to see clear traces in the Schwabach altar-piece of Dürer's influence on his master, and Waagen* holds the same opinion with regard to the carved ornaments on the celebrated Imhoff *Weihbrodschein* (*ciborium*, or tabernacle), which Adam Kraft executed, 1496–1500, for the Church of St. Lawrence. But if we consider what Dürer produced in the first years after his

* *Kunstwerke in Deutschland*, ii. p. 243.

return home, and how little opportunity he had till then of accomplishing great tasks, we shall see how far in this instance an observation, quite correct in itself, has served to reverse the ordinary historical course of events.

It seems much more natural to admit that Dürer, not only before his apprenticeship, but even some time afterwards, was subject to Wolgemut's influence than that art could move, as it were, backwards, and a master of sixty to seventy years of age remodel his style on that of a pupil in the first stage of his development. This is further proved incidentally through Dürer's connection with Adam Kraft the sculptor, who died in the Schwabach hospital in the year 1507, for Kraft was a contemporary of Wolgemut's, and showed a great predilection for that master's picturesque manner. His figures, though stiff, owing to the draperies being broken up into too many folds, show a great striving after natural truth and life-like expression of feeling. Their somewhat thick-set forms and rounded type of head are certainly more after Dürer's manner, but in this Dürer was the follower rather than the leader. Most of Kraft's work was no doubt in stone, but that he also worked in wood is proved by a receipt found amongst the Imhoff archives, acknowledging payment for the two carved wooden angels of the tabernacle already mentioned, and also by a document of the year 1500, in which he is styled "wood carver."* While Wolgemut clearly gave little heed to the carved figures of his altar-pieces, Kraft endeavoured in his sculpture to carry out all that Wolgemut aimed at in his paintings. As regards architectural decoration, the two went hand in hand. Their Nuremberg surroundings, and the prevailing taste of the day, joined to the absence of any other tradition, confined them to Gothic models as forms of ornament, little as these satisfied

* Communicated by Baron G. Imhoff. See, too, Baader, *Jahrbücher für Kunstwissenschaft*, ii. p. 79.

the artists' newly awakened feeling for nature. Unable any longer to derive inspiration from a style that had passed away they took to a virtuoso way of treating the means at their disposal, and in so doing allowed themselves all but impossible liberties. The laws of construction were sacrificed to the too slender and airy creations of their fancy, the munnions cross and recross one another, and are at one time overladen with figures, at another surcharged with all kinds of vegetable objects and fantastic creations. The most audacious things of this kind were perpetrated by Adam Kraft in his tabernacles at Nuremberg, Schwabach, and Heilbronn; and so extraordinary are the shapes into which he has wrought his material that tradition might well credit him with the secret of softening stones and hardening them again after having moulded them according to his fancy.

Many similar eccentricities of design, such, for instance, as the bent pinnacles, occur in the Gothic stalls which Wolgemut occasionally introduces in the *Schatzbehalter;* but it is in the engravings for goldsmith's work that his connection with Kraft shows itself most plainly. Bartsch and Passavant describe seven designs in this style for monstrance coronas, which, however, they attribute to Wenzel of Olmütz, and the Berlin Cabinet possesses the copy of a complete expository marked with a W. Metal is the only material in which to execute on a small scale the tall, slender pinnacles and open fretwork of this Gothic architecture, and Adam Kraft must be considered guilty of an error of taste when he took them as a model for his high-towering tabernacles, for he sacrificed the delicate grace that characterises such work on a small scale in metal, without gaining the grandeur that distinguishes it on a large scale in stone. No such mistake was made by Wolgemut. The airy forms that occur in his engraved designs for goldsmith's work are never found in his larger compositions, though there are unmis-

takable points of comparison in the details. For instance, the little figures introduced into the ornamentation of those engravings have the same full, rounded forms and noble bearing, and are as gracefully draped as the large ones wreathed in twining foliage on the reverse side of the Schwabach altar-piece; and they are supported by corbels like those under the big saints of the Peringsdörffer altar-piece. A similar treatment of detail is seen in a design by Wolgemut for a drinking-cup, the pear-shaped bowl of which is formed of bosses resembling fishes' bladders;* and that Dürer towards the end of his career reproduced the same peculiarities in his designs for goldsmiths is evidenced by a coloured pen sketch in the Albertina, dated 1526, of a double drinking-cup, and by other sketches of similar subjects in the Dresden *Dürer-Codex*—such of them at least as are really Dürer's.

If, in comparing the points of resemblance between two artists, and endeavouring to come to some conclusion as to which exercised influence over the other, we simply take the most natural view of the case, we must inevitably allow that in the majority of instances it is the older who leads the way, and the younger who follows. Nor can any different conclusion be arrived at in estimating the relationship between the two generations represented, the one by Wolgemut and Kraft, the other by Dürer and Peter Vischer. It is simply the fact of the younger artist being in each case the better known one, and being consequently adopted as the standard in judging of the other, that has caused an opinion to be formed at variance with the usual order of things.

* Passavant, No. 79, in the Dresden Cabinet.

CHAPTER V.

TRAVELS AND LANDSCAPE PAINTING.

"The thing [works of art] that pleased me so well eleven years ago."
DÜRER.



N the same brief style in which he speaks of his apprenticeship with Wolgemut, Dürer adds: "And when I had served my time, my father sent me away, and I was absent four years, until he recalled me. I set out after Easter in 1490, and returned in 1494, after Whitsuntide."* As neither he himself nor others have left any account of his travels, it is difficult to know to what place he went first, and where those four years were spent. Some information on the subject may be gleaned here and there, from scattered traditions, and more especially from his own youthful productions; many valuable hints, too, might be gathered from the well-filled portfolios he brought back with him from his travels.

Sandrart's statement, that he went to the Netherlands, is evidently a mistake. There is no authority for it, nor is it in any way borne out either by the course of his artistic development or by the circumstantial diary of his subsequent

* Easter Sunday fell in 1490 on the 11th April, and Whitsunday in 1494 on the 18th May.

journey to that country in 1521. Both, indeed, point rather to an opposite conclusion, since we find him departing more and more from the traditions of the Flemish school, which still held their ground in Wolgemut's studio, and, though retaining above all the lively sense of the charms of landscape scenery which distinguished that school, taking nature herself as his only guide and teacher in the method of its treatment.

Christoph Scheurl, in his eulogy of Anton Kress, printed in 1515, states that Dürer, at the termination of his three years' apprenticeship with his neighbour Wolgemut, travelled through Germany, and was well received and kindly entertained at Colmar, in 1492, by Martin Schongauer's brothers, the goldsmiths, Caspar and Paul, and the painter, Ludwig, and at Basle by another brother, George, also a goldsmith; but Martin himself, who had died on the 2nd February 1488,* he, to his very great regret, did not see. So far this account of Scheurl's, resting, as it does, on Dürer's own statements, deserves to be trusted. Journeying from place to place, and stopping to work, as was the wont of the handicraftsmen of those days, now in one studio and now in another, Dürer probably began by turning his steps in a westerly direction. There is additional authority, though not of a very trustworthy nature, to be found for this conjecture in the inventories of the Imhoff collection, where, amongst the pictures attributed, not always with the greatest scrupulousness, to Dürer (1573–1574), are mentioned "a small picture of an old man, who was his master at Strassburg, painted on parchment," and "a small portrait of a woman, in oil, painted in Strassburg, 1494, pendant to the former."† That this description is not taken from any

* See *Pirkheimeri Opera*, ed. Goldast, p. 352, and E. His, *Archiv für zeichn. Künste*, 1867, for the year of Martin Schongauer's death.

† v. Eye, *A. Dürer*, Synoptical Table, Nos. 26, 27.

original source is shown by the fact that in the inventory of 1580 the words are, "done by an old master at Strassburg," instead of "who was his master at Strassburg;" the doubtful date affixed to the woman's portrait being altogether omitted. The pictures, which were evidently small in size, have long been lost, but their having been painted in oil on parchment so entirely accords with what is known of Dürer's earliest method that their originality and the consequent accuracy of Scheurl's statement may be generally accepted as proved. The date 1494 seems, however, to be wrongly given; perhaps it is a misreading for 1490 or 1491. Certainly, if Dürer went from Colmar to Basle in 1492, he is not likely to have come back again to Strassburg. Nor, again, would he have remained in the Rhine country till 1494 without pushing farther on his way.

To this period must be assigned two very carefully executed water-colour drawings in the Albertina, representing the two opposite sides of some long open space in a town, hitherto supposed, on an entirely unfounded assumption of Heller's, to be a view of the Thiergärtner Thorplatz, as seen from the house bought by Dürer in 1509. But this place in no way resembles that represented in the drawing, nor has the architecture of the surrounding buildings anything in common with that of old Nuremberg. The originals of those low-arched arcades, timber-bonded walls, battlemented gables, and many-sided projecting tower, with its flight of steps outside, are to be looked for rather in Western Germany. The lines of the building were originally drawn in charcoal, with the help of a ruler, and then rather highly coloured, accurate attention being paid to the different materials employed in the construction. The perspective is deficient, and suffers from the horizon being too high, a defect which recalls Wolgemut's manner in his views of towns in Schedel's Chronicle; but the exclusion

of all arbitrary forms and the faithful manner in which details are rendered show an advancement in the study of nature. In one of these pictures the sky has been left white; in the other it is covered with heavy clouds, from whose opaque masses, as they catch the slanting rays of the setting sun, gleams a strange magical reflected light. This unusual effect is a happy transcript from nature, and harmonises well with the dominant grey tone of the whole picture. Like most of Dürer's landscape studies, these water-colours have no date on them, only the monogram, added later.

Where Dürer spent the year 1493 is uncertain, but two works of his of that date happen to be preserved. One is the miniature in the Albertina, painted in tempera on parchment, of the Child Jesus, half-length, in a window arch. He wears a little white shirt full of folds, and is looking up smiling, with his head somewhat sentimentally turned on one side, while in the tiny hand that rests upon the window-ledge he holds a golden ball. The close-cut fair hair, the bluish eyes, the rather large ears, and the high arched brow, reveal the German model, whose peculiarities are retained with great ingenuousness. This little figure shows wonderful finish and modelling, and produces, in its frame of green foliage, a touching and charming effect. Unfortunately, the tempera colours did not adhere well to the skin of the parchment, and have partly fallen off in consequence. The other picture done in this year is the large likeness of himself, also on parchment, and which has suffered still greater injury. A detailed description of it will be found in the next chapter.

Nothing that Dürer could have met with at this time on the borders of the Rhine, particularly in Schongauer's school, could have greatly influenced his artistic development. The method of painting practised there did not materially differ from Wolgemut's, and in point of execution

rose no oftener to anything like perfection; while there was nothing new in Schongauer's wonderful gift of invention, or in his method of engraving on copper; for Dürer, as an apprentice, had already learned to admire and imitate both, having very probably worked with Wolgemut at many of the copies of Schongauer's engravings which the latter published, thus laying the foundation of the technical proficiency in engraving he afterwards acquired. Even had he been in immediate personal relation with the great master of the Colmar school, Dürer would hardly have caught any of his delicate tone of feeling. The young Nuremberg artist had already tasted rougher fare; led by Wolgemut, he had not only passed out of the influence of the spiritualistic school, but had advanced a step farther, and had followed the strongly marked tendency of the age by endeavouring to paint nature as he found her. Having studied under one who was himself a pupil of Schongauer's, Dürer could not become in his turn that artist's pupil.

To have learned anything of the Colmar master, the art-loving youth, eager for instruction, would have had to journey Rhine-wards a whole generation earlier, when the elder Dürer, and very probably also Wolgemut, the one a painter, and the other a goldsmith, sought those great artists of the Netherlands who from their profound sense of reality and their mastery of technical means were at the head of the movement that was then taking place in art. Rogier van der Weyden went to Italy in 1449, not to learn anything from the artists there, but to dazzle them with the perfection of his artistic skill. The Portinari altar-piece in Santa Maria Nuova at Florence was executed some time after that by Hugo van der Goes; and Justus of Ghent painted his Last Supper for the Church of Santa Agata at Urbino in 1474. On the other hand, Antonello da Messina came in 1440 to Bruges to acquire from Jan

van Eyck the secret of oil-painting, and of his brilliant colouring, and bring it back to Venice. But whatever effect on Italian painting was produced in the first instance by its contact with the North, it had by the end of the fifteenth century far outgrown all outward influences, and had attained a self-dependence by which, more than by anything else, its greatness is to be measured. The first great outburst of naturalism in the Netherlands was over before Dürer set out on his travels. Indeed, the current had already begun to ebb. Hans Memling and Antonello da Messina, the chief representatives in the North and South respectively of van Eyck's art, both died just at that time; and so far as there still continued to be any interchange of relations between the Flemish and the Italian schools, it was no longer the former that took the lead. Jacopo de' Barbari, when he traversed Germany at the beginning of the sixteenth century, and went to the Netherlands, remained at heart a Venetian, whilst his comrade, Jan Gossaert de Mabuse, quickly abandoned the style which characterises his work in the Grimani *Book of Hours*, and became a decided follower of the Italian Renaissance.*

It is certain therefore that a decided supremacy in matters of art and taste had been already assumed by Italy during the last decade of the fifteenth century, and contemporaries, though they could not theoretically account for the fact as we can now, were yet distinctly conscious of it. Dürer was impelled southwards in 1493 by the same motives which, when they were young, enticed his father and Wolgemut to the Netherlands. To see Venice was no doubt his chief desire. Close and active relations had long been maintained between Nuremberg and the City of the Lagoons, whose splendour formed, probably, a frequent theme of conversation

* *Dürer's Briefe*, &c., p. 105, l. 2, and p. 223.

in Dürer's home. Many Nurembergers held a prominent position there in the Fondaco de' Tedeschi, or German factory, and were often backwards and forwards between the two cities. Others went in search of learning to the neighbouring university of Padua, and no doubt many an engraving found its way to the North in company with the editions of the classics which issued from the Aldine press in that town. From 1490 to 1497, Wilibald Pirkheimer, who, in a letter to Celtes dated 1504, could boast of possessing all the Greek books that had been printed in Italy, was a student, first at the university of Padua, and then at Pavia.

The only proofs of Dürer's having made any stay in Venice in 1494 are to be found in his sketch-books and in his letters. Doppelmayr * indeed says the last place he went to during his first wandering, before marrying and settling down at Nuremberg, was Venice; but as he makes no mention of the stay which Dürer is known to have made at Venice in 1506, it is possible that he has mistaken the date. Most of the writers on art have taken no notice of this fact, so important in its bearings on Dürer's progress, and it has only quite recently found decided support.†

The observation has often been made that Dürer's second sojourn in Venice, from 1505 to 1507, had, comparatively speaking, very little influence on the course of his artistic development, and the truth of this will be apparent when we come to see how slight a difference exists between the most important compositions produced before and after that period. That it should be so is surprising, but may perhaps be explained by the fact that Dürer had then already reached the full height of his development, and was himself quite conscious of having done so; and some equally good

* *Nachricht*, Nuremberg, 1730, p. 183.

† Following Fiorillo and Selvatico, Baron von Retberg supports this view in *Archiv für zeichn. Künste*, vi. 1866, p. 178; as also H. Grimm, *Ueber Künstler und Kunstw.* i. p. 133.

reason might be found for the unmistakable traces of Italian influence shown in the work done by him before 1506. But in his letter from Venice, of the 9th February 1506, Dürer makes very distinct allusion to his former stay there, although the way in which he speaks of Giovanni Bellini in the same letter shows that he first made his acquaintance, or at any rate learned to appreciate him on this second occasion. He adds, "Though he [Bellini] is very old, he is still the best painter here; the thing (*das Ding*) that pleased me so well eleven years ago does so no longer, though no one would have made me believe it if I did not see it for myself." The word "*Ding*" is always used by Dürer in a collective sense, and means here, as in many other places, the productions, the works, of art.* Now this opinion or taste to which he refers as having altered to a degree he could not have believed, had he not proved it with his own eyes, must have been originally formed by personal observation; and the lapse of time which he mentions as having occurred between the formation of this original opinion and his becoming conscious of a change in it agrees well enough with what has been already stated, for if Dürer was at Venice in 1494, and returned there, as it is known he did, in 1505, he would speak in general terms of the interval between forming and changing his opinion as eleven years. At any rate, it is more natural to fix the time by this statement than to trust to a chance date in a letter in which, indeed, no particular accuracy is to be expected.†

If the two paintings on parchment of the year 1493,

* *Dürer's Briefe*, p. 6, l. 15, and p. 187.

† Christoph Scheurl must have known of Dürer's first stay in Venice, for in 1506 he wrote of him in the *Lib. de Laud. Germ.*: "Qui quum nuper in Italiam *rediisset*, tum a Venetis, tum a Bononiensibus artificibus, me saepe interprete, consalutatus est alter Apelles."

already referred to, were finished in Germany, and if Dürer returned home at Whitsuntide 1494, he cannot have stopped long in Venice, at any rate not long enough to have made himself familiar with the different opposing styles at work in the Venetian school, and to have been influenced more lastingly by one than another. He would certainly have been more susceptible to such influence at twenty-three than ten years later; but it is impossible merely from his remark already quoted either to affirm positively that he had become the partisan of any particular style, or to say what it was that pleased him so much at one time, and then afterwards, when he returned in 1505, no longer excited his admiration, whether *e.g.* it was exclusively the Mantegnesque style or not; there is, in fact, no sufficient information to go upon. Meantime, in the present state of our knowledge on the subject, the explanation of this strange remark must be sought for by comparing the progress of art in Venice with Dürer's own development; for, notwithstanding the many and varied influences which surrounded him during those ten years of incessant study and research, he had unconsciously reached independence by a road similar to that the Venetian school itself had followed generally up to the beginning of the sixteenth century; not however, it is true, without having had some indirect acquaintance with the productions of that school.

As in politics, so in art, Venice occupied a position distinct from the rest of Italy. Midway geographically between Germany and the south of Italy, and the medium of commercial relations between the two, she also formed, so to say, the middle term in art between the Northern mode of feeling on the one hand and the Southern mode of expression on the other. It was long before the forms of the Renaissance penetrated into Venetian art, but when they did, it was suddenly, and often without any modification. About 1450

the Gothic style still predominated at Venice, both in architecture and sculpture. Churches and palaces were being built and decorated in the old style, whilst at the same time there existed that Oriental love of splendour which displays itself in gold and bright colours. In sculpture, native art, unaided from without, could only succeed in becoming, in a limited sense, the true interpreter of nature. The new style met with its first decided supporters amongst artist families, such as the Bregni, the Rizzi, and the Lombardi, who had migrated from the mainland. But the Venetian school of sculpture never reached the freedom and realism of Donatello and the Florentines. It retained reminiscences of the middle ages, and a softness of outline and tendency to sentiment dear to the German heart. It was not directly influenced by the antique, but rather followed the Paduan school of painting, which was far in advance of the Venetian in plastic perfection; just as the architecture in Mantegna's paintings is more in accord with Roman models, and displays a far richer development of the Renaissance spirit than any contemporary Venetian buildings. As art in the City of the Lagoons was not an original growth, but rather the outcome of foreign influences, and of a love of pomp and splendour, sculpture and architecture were, contrary to all rules, mere appendages there of a school of painting which far surpassed them in creative power.

The first school of painting which attained to individual importance in Venice is that of Murano. Its founder was a German master from the Upper Rhine, or from Cologne. On the altar-pieces which he executed, conjointly with Antonio Vivarini, after 1440, he signs himself "Johannes Alemannus," or "de Alemania." * After his death the brothers Antonio and

* Crowe and Cavalcaselle, *History of Painting in North Italy*, i. p. 20, et seq. It is to be noted, however, that more stress is here laid on the literary than on the artistic influence exercised by Gentile da Fabriano.

Bartolommeo Vivarini continued to work in the old method. Not only the rich Gothic frames, but the pictures themselves, are quite mediæval and Northern, not to say German, in taste; and, strangely enough, the same may be said of the single great authentic work by Francesco Squarcione of Padua, the picture for the altar of St. Jerome, painted between 1449 and 1452, for the Lazzara family, and now in the gallery of Padua. Here the ruined vault in the background, supported by two red porphyry columns, and the rough square pedestals on which the saints in the side compartments stand, show hardly any signs that the master's eye was not wholly blind to the remains of antiquity. The merit ascribed to Francesco Squarcione of having introduced the study of the antique may therefore be considered as purely theoretical. It was his adopted son and scholar, Andrea Mantegna (born 1431, died 1506), who really made use of the knowledge Squarcione had gained on his travels, and of the works of art and plaster-casts which he had collected. Mantegna was the actual founder of the great Paduan Renaissance style; the style in which, between the years 1450 and 1460, he decorated the chapel of St. Christopher in the Church of the Eremitani. He was the first to introduce into the hitherto flat picture the effects of light and shade and of perspective, and to animate it with living, moving figures. With the same delight with which the Northern painters faithfully copied natural objects, he and his learned friends devoted themselves to the study of the antique monuments then so much more numerous in northern Italy than at present. Owing to the flourishing condition of philology and mathematics at the university of Padua, the artist had every facility for acquiring the necessary preliminary knowledge. Hence the novel and accurately calculated effects in perspective, the splendour of the antique ornaments, and the archæo-

logical correctness of the old Roman costumes which Mantegna was the first to introduce into painting. The deliberate intention displayed in the use of these innovations did not then produce the effect of insipidity as it does now when we look back upon the way they have been wasted and abused for centuries. Besides, it was fully compensated for by the lively conception of reality, the varied expression of different moods, the perfect understanding of anatomy, the management of groups of figures, the graceful treatment of distant, terraced hills like those behind Vicenza, and, lastly, by an overpowering grandeur of thought and composition.

Mantegna's discoveries must have made all the deeper impression in Venice because the poverty of ideas there had brought about a want of independence. The brothers Gentile and Giovanni Bellini were the first to experience the influence of the new school, as they worked in the studio of their father Jacopo in Padua, and knew Mantegna, who at that time married their sister Nicolasia. So closely, indeed, did the younger brother Giovanni copy Mantegna's style that his early paintings were often attributed to the latter. The sudden introduction of the principles of the Paduan Renaissance was a serious blow to the Murano school. Less hesitating than others, Bartolommeo Vivarini adopted the new style, and, as is often the case with imitators, exaggerated its defects. The rivalry with the flourishing studios of the two Bellini spurred him on to unusual efforts, and his young cousin, Alwise Vivarini, carried on the strife with fresh weapons. Needless to say, the Bellini were the victors, and ended by compelling every one, friends and foes, to follow their lead. Since the establishment, at Venice, of Antonello da Messina, they had been ceaselessly endeavouring to make every use of the method of oil painting introduced by him, thereby securing their works against

the effect of the exhalations from the Lagoons. To bring this new method to perfection was their chief aim. The importance of their works does not consist in originality of design, in loftiness of conception, in the correlation of the movements or actions of the figures represented; what gives unity to their largest compositions is merely the flowing harmony produced by a rich scheme of colouring. Their perception of anything deeper was confined to portraits, that is to say, to the representation of single figures, which was enough to satisfy the wants of a society whose existence was founded on the enjoyment of life, public tranquillity, and self-government. Side by side with the Bellini there was a third school, which held an isolated position in the history of Italian art, and which we might call the Teutonic. It appears to have originated with Giovanni d'Alemania, to have passed, through the studio of the older painters of Murano, to Carlo Crivelli, about 1450, and to have been carried on into the sixteenth century by Marco Marziale, and by Nicolo and Jacopo de' Barbari. Its followers showed a peculiar leaning to everything that was fantastic and strange, and sought to satisfy this tendency by travelling. Their style is by turns showy and finished, sharply characteristic, or sentimentally expressive, reminding us now and again, in spite of being essentially Venetian, of the German-Flemish school.

This revolution in the history of Venetian art was by no means at an end when Dürer came to Venice for the first time in 1493 or 1494. The two Vivarini were still at work, Bartolommeo till 1499, Alwise till 1503. Giovanni Bellini had not yet produced his last and most distinctive works, and the existence of Giorgione and Titian was still unknown outside his studio. With which of the three schools the German painter's pupil came in contact, we are unaware; probably, however, it was with the third, more peculiar

than important, to which belonged Jacopo de' Barbari, for this artist, as we shall presently see, was closely connected with Nuremberg. Dürer could hardly at that time have had access to the greatest masters in the town, the Bellini; but even supposing him to have had the opportunity of seeing their paintings, we must not delude ourselves as to the impression produced upon him by a Holy Conversation of Giovanni's, or a festal procession of Gentile's or of Vittore Carpaccio's. For him the subject had not the interest it has for us; while the drawing, far from being, as in German art, the chief consideration, was obscured by a method of painting of which the technical qualities were new to him, and its specific feeling for colour incomprehensible. Even in 1506 he did not think it worth his while to take any notice of Giorgione or Titian. The utter want of all spiritual, intellectual, and sympathetic qualities must have repelled the youth who was already filled with the ideas of his Apocalypse. Beside these Venetians, Andrea Mantegna seemed to him a giant.

The young Dürer, no doubt, derived from his studies with Wolgemut, and from his intercourse with artists and scholars in his own country, only a very obscure knowledge of the greatness of antique art. The more indefinite were his ideas on the subject, the greater must have been his astonishment at these forms, which appeared to him to be directly drawn from classical antiquity. Without being able to judge of them theoretically, he must have discovered, so soon as he felt them to be worthy of appreciation, how much the style of composition in these mythological and secular subjects differed from that adopted by Christian art. The figures of Mantegna must have consequently produced all the more impression upon him when he recognised in them the influence of the antique. Still the peculiarities and subtle shades of difference that marked the new style could

not be as clear to the German youth as they are to us, who look at them after the lapse of time and from an objective point of view. On the whole, it was rather an indefinite something which Dürer admired in the year 1494 as antique and venerable. And thus it was that, besides Mantegna's engravings, he found other works of art in Venice worthy of imitation, which in their style were as far behind Mantegna's classical objectivity as in pathos and sentiment they approached the spirit of the Northern school. These observations are based, in default of other works of Dürer's of that early period, on an examination of the leaves of his large sketch-book, some of which have happily been preserved. One of these, in the Albertina, shows us on the left half of the sheet a design full of figures for the Rape of Europa after Lucian's description. The subject of the chief group, with the lean bull and the kneeling figure of Europa on his back, is most clumsily conceived. Around them Nereids and genii are swimming on fishes of all shapes; here and there appear little winged heads, like cherubims; and in the background is a group of Europa's despairing playmates, like that of the women in the engraving called "The Sea Monster" (*Meerwunder*) or "The Rape of Amymone." The small accessory figures, such as the pair of satyrs in the reeds in the left foreground, are more happily conceived, and some of them have a grace which shows the influence of Italian models. Still, the composition seems to be entirely Dürer's own. With the same pen he has covered the right side of the sheet with various studies from Venetian subjects. Above are sketches of a lion's head from three different points of view. The original is one of the two small lions (*leoncini*) in red marble which are now to the left of St. Mark's, and from which the Piazzetta de' Leoni takes its name. Where they stood in Dürer's time is not known. They are quite antique in character, and their lean bodies are rather roughly sculptured, so that

one cannot help wondering what induced Dürer to bestow so much attention on them; whether it was the novelty of the subject, or a sense of power and substantiality as compared with the wretched dwarfed poodles of the van Eyck and Wolgemut schools, or the life-like, though sad and almost whimpering, expression of their countenances. To the left, below, on the same sheet, we find an Apollo,



crowned with laurel, in a poetic and graceful attitude, and holding a bow and arrow—a strange mixture of mediæval sentiment, modern realism, and antique drapery, which can only have originated from the Venice of the sixteenth century. Nowhere either but in Venice could Dürer have found the type of the alchemist sketched on the same sheet in a Turkish turban and long robe, with a skull in his hands,

standing before a closed book and a circular cauldron on which is inscribed the word LVTVS.

Another sheet of pen sketches, done on his travels, is to be found in the Uffizii. at Florence, containing representations of a knight on horseback, in magnificent armour; the torso of a naked shield-bearer; a child, whose rounded forms are certainly Italian, half sitting, half lying on the ground, in the attitude of an Infant Christ of Francesco Francia or Perugino; and, lastly, the head of a bearded Turk, with open mouth and an angry look, which Dürer made use of, on his return home, as a model for the emperor Diocletian, in the engraving in his Apocalypse representing the martyrdom of St. John, where it, of course, appears reversed.

To this period probably also belongs a drawing, in the portfolio of the Ambras Museum at Vienna, of a strong-limbed Cupid, with dragon's wings, like the antlers of an elk. He is in the act of discharging an arrow, and peeps out from under the bandage tied round his brow. This drawing, which is done with the pen and washed with Indian ink, strongly reminds us of the Mantegna school, though where and when Dürer found the opportunity of seeing that master's paintings we know not. There is nothing to prove that he visited Padua at that time. Besides, Mantegna had long since migrated to Mantua, so that Dürer would have had no better chance of seeing him than in 1506, when the sudden death of the aged master cut short his intention of paying him a visit. There is a remarkable analogy between Dürer's relations with Mantegna and Schongauer. Of all his precursors, these were probably the two men whom he most venerated, and they are the only artists whose personal acquaintance Dürer is said to have desired and sought. In both instances fate persistently denied him his wish, as if to guard him from every overpowering influence,

so that his greatness might develop itself independently. Without imitating too closely either of these very different masters, Dürer has some of Schongauer's tenderness and some of Mantegna's grandeur and dignity. But in the same degree in which he is related to both he is also distinct from them. If, on the whole, he may be more closely compared to the German master, this is to be explained partly by the purely national characteristics common to both, and partly by the intermediate position which Wolgemut held between them. We know that Dürer collected drawings by Schongauer and preserved them religiously ;* but, on the other hand, we find no trace of his having studied Schongauer's works so earnestly as those of Mantegna. Two of Dürer's drawings in the Albertina bear valuable testimony to this.

As Mantegna's engravings could easily have found their way to Nuremberg in the ordinary course of trade, it has been supposed that Dürer's copies of them were made there. But the circumstance that all his works of this kind bear the date of 1494, and a comparison of them with other designs belonging to the period of his travels, forces us to the conclusion that it was only in Italy that Dürer devoted himself to the study of Mantegna. The eclectic objectiveness of later days was quite unknown to the fifteenth-century artist, who composed simply, was slow to appreciate anything strange, and was never successful in imitation unless he had become entirely imbued with the new tendencies. Thus

* Heinecken, *Neue Nachrichten*, p. 406, possessed one of these, a large pen sketch, representing a chapel, &c, on which Dürer had written "Daz hat der hübseh Martin gerissen im 1470. jar, da er ein jung gsell was. Das hab ich Albreeht Dürer erfarn und Im zu ern daher geschrieben im 1517. jar." "The admirable Martin did this in 1470, while yet a pupil. I, Albert Dürer, found out this fact, and wrote this inscription in his honour in 1517." Another masterly pen sketch in the British Museum, of Christ as the teacher of the world, also bears the inscription in Dürer's hand, "Das hat hübseh Martin gemaeht im 1469. jor." "The admirable Martin did this in 1469." Waagen, *Treasures of Art*, iv. p. 34.

we shall see later that Dürer copied nothing but works of the German school on his return home, and soon became distinctly opposed to the Italian school; and that, while seeking to surpass the former, he endeavoured to refute the teaching of the latter. It was different in Venice, where his surroundings and his familiarity with the different studios, might lead him to appreciate the style of Mantegna. There he could easily find his subjects in the street. He always, it is true, preserved in his copies a certain individuality, while at the same time displaying a rare aptitude for rendering unfamiliar forms such as can be found perhaps in no one else but Rubens.

The engravings of Mantegna, from which Dürer executed the two drawings we have spoken of, are the contest between two Tritons, each carrying a Nereid on his back, and the Bacchanal with a vat.* Dürer's copies are done with the pen on white paper, and are the same size as the originals. What no doubt chiefly attracted him was the powerful reality in these groups, which were inspired by some antique bas-reliefs, and the symmetry of the nude figures. While scarcely altering anything in the composition, he has not by any means copied them stroke for stroke, but has aspired to show himself independent by an attempt at more accurate modelling, the result of which has been to render him far inferior to Mantegna in plastic force and expression. Mantegna's method of shading with short slanting strokes from right to left in the manner of Antonio Pollaiuolo did not satisfy Dürer. He renders the details of each form, and by employing every possible means, from the most delicate strokes to multiplied cross lines, gives the effect of perfect roundness to what in Mantegna only appears like a relief. By this Dürer showed not only his progress in the German

* Bartsch, *Peintre-graveur*, xiii. fig. 238, Nos. 17 and 20.

technical method of drawing, but also that unbounded love of nature which does not accept a lifeless tradition in art, and only devotes itself to it for the purpose of bringing it nearer to the semblance of reality. But in thus giving to Mantegna's figures a more distinct existence and a more decidedly substantial appearance, he unwittingly deprived them of intelligence; and that is the reverse side of the realism which seeks for truth in the utmost cultivation of form. How little it was Dürer's intention to fall short of the animation of the original is shown by his subsequent development, which brought him nearer and nearer to Mantegna's grand simplicity; and that he never, even after his second stay in Venice, ceased to admire that master's power of expressing feeling is proved by the head of the Apostle St. John in the engraving of "The Great Crucifixion," executed in 1508, which distinctly recalls the well-known figure of St. John in Mantegna's Entombment.

It is significant of Dürer's state of mind at that time that the subjects which most attracted him were those which gave expression to deep and passionate emotion. German painting had with difficulty shaken off the yoke of the old style. After the stereotyped aspect of its draped emaciated figures, the outburst of passionate feeling in the rounded nude forms of the Paduan Renaissance must have seemed like a proclamation of freedom. The Northern striving after life and nature found here a connecting link, while as yet the higher law of a skilled moderation was unrevealed. Calmness and strict order might easily seem like new fetters, and nothing would lead us to infer that the simple grouping of the saints in the Venetian altar-pieces produced any great impression upon Dürer.

Nor had he in 1494 the theoretical knowledge necessary for appreciating the manifold forms of decoration shown in the painted architecture and ornamentation of the Paduan

Renaissance. Evidently he had not yet read Vitruvius. But, on the other hand, the interiors of the Venetian churches, with their rich perspective, had a peculiar charm for him. The graceful arched naves on slender columns massively clustered together, as in the church of Santa Maria Formosa, completed in 1491, and the similar, though more simple and delicate, ones in the older San Giovanni Crisostomo (1483), became vividly impressed on his mind at that time. At least we find the same arches introduced into the architecture of Dürer's earlier compositions, as, for example, in the *Grüne Passion* (Green Passion),* of 1504; and though no doubt they are treated independently, and are not directly borrowed, still such recollections can only have been brought back from Venice. Even without actual studies for them, these subjects presented themselves to him as soon as he attempted to substitute for his usual landscape background, an architectural surrounding in the style of the Renaissance.

The miniature of a lion, with the genuine date and monogram, 1494, A D, in the Harzen collection at the Hamburg Kunsthalle, also belongs to the period of Dürer's first stay in Venice. The animal is in a peculiar, striding position, as we sometimes find in representations of the lion of St. Mark. But from the extraordinary care with which the painting, which is on parchment, is executed, down to each separate hair, it is evident that it was done from a living model, and for this study Dürer must have had better opportunities in Venice than elsewhere. As far as the broadly treated and somewhat confused surrounding landscape allows us to distinguish, the animal is represented at the entrance of a dark cavern; the foreground is filled with a luxuriant green vegetation, heightened in parts with gold;

* So called from the drawings being on a green-tinted paper.

in the background we have a view of the sea-coast. This is without doubt the earliest picture of a lion done from nature by the hand of a Northern painter. The accessory work is unimportant, and only serves to form the dark background against which the yellow mane of the lion stands out.

But Dürer's true element at that time was landscape, and to this he turned his most studious attention during his southern journey. Witness the pen sketch in the Albertina, of which the annexed engraving is a reproduction on a smaller scale. Nothing but the steep rocky precipice on the left is thoroughly finished, the rest is only sketched in. The castle, rising out of a group of trees in the middle distance, served afterwards as a design for the one in the background of the engraving (Bartsch, No. 95) representing a monstrous pig. The central tower is, it is true, left out in the engraving, but the reproduction of the general details in reverse shows that it is done from the sketch. The view is evidently taken from an Alpine valley, and the traveller slightly sketched in, and seen from behind, who raises his right arm joyfully as he strides on towards a gate that bars the narrow way, may he not be intended for Dürer himself, who wished thus with a few strokes to give vent to his own feelings?

There exists another set of Dürer's landscape studies and views of castles and towns which belongs to his journey to Italy through the Tyrol. These have all been ascribed to the period of his journey to Venice in 1506, the earlier visit being hitherto unknown. But this view is now contradicted by internal and external evidence. With the exception of a brown rocky landscape in the British Museum, dated 1506, the collection of water-colours and miniatures in question oirginally bore neither date nor signature. The monogram has indeed been added in bistre, sometimes in Dürer's, sometimes in a strange hand, and joined to the names



LANDSCAPE.

(*From the Pen Drawing in the Albertina at Vienna.*)

To face p. 118, Vol. I.

of the places which are inscribed in Dürer's earliest and finest handwriting in Indian ink. This is also the case with the sketches done by Dürer in the neighbourhood of Nuremberg, and helps to prove that all the views of which we speak belonged to an early period; for, as a matter of fact, after 1503 the master hardly ever parted with a fairly finished drawing without appending to it his monogram and the date. Most of the above-mentioned landscapes and studies of trees are more or less filled in with colour, some on paper, some on parchment, and executed with a care rarely met with in his later sketches. It is not likely that Dürer would have made so marked an exception to his usual mode of signature if they had belonged to any other than that early period, in which he had not as yet adopted his well-known monogram. His later studies from nature are more broadly treated and slighter. He no longer attempts to reproduce the colours in a landscape, but at most imitates their effects in washed pen drawings; later still he contents himself with simple pen or pencil sketches.

Other reasons of a more general nature may be added in support of our argument. Dürer's journey to Venice in 1505 was distinctly undertaken with a view to business, for he carried with him all manner of works of art, and even paintings. He doubtless travelled on horseback, with one of those goods caravans that plied between Venice and Nuremberg, and, even had he been so disposed, could hardly have had leisure to produce such finished landscapes; for though a rapid worker, it would have taken him, not hours, but whole days, to complete them on the spot. Besides, amongst all Dürer's works of about the year 1506, we have no example of such finished painting in tempera or gouache, whereas it is clear from the works already instanced that Dürer did make use of those methods on his early travels. It is not the finished artist bent on an impor-

tant business journey who would be likely to accumulate such minute studies in his portfolio, but rather the young journeyman, wandering from place to place with no other object than to see and learn. We shall therefore not go far wrong if we assign the following studies from nature to the years 1493–94, and those in a similar style, of his own country, to the period immediately after his return home.

First, there is in the Albertina a view of Innsbruck, marked "*Insprug*" in Dürer's own hand, a town with walls and towers, from the centre of which rises a slender, pointed church tower with a wooden roof. It is taken from the north, the river Inn forming the foreground, and reflecting the buildings with wonderful clearness in its rippling waters. In the background are snow-capped mountains. The green hue of the river harmonises well with the delicate blue of the slightly clouded sky. Still more successful, and in better preservation, is a large general view of the town of Trent, also with the name marked in Dürer's own hand, now in the Kunsthalle at Bremen. The sky is of a brilliant blue; the mountains, in the background, perfect in airy perspective; the buildings, of a brownish tone peculiar at that time to Dürer; the flowing water and the foliage are happily caught: the whole powerful in colouring, but well balanced, and as true to nature as the most modern realist could desire. Dürer has made a separate water-colour drawing of part of the town wall, with three towers, and crowned by the castle, which is ornamented with a loggia in the style of the Venetian palaces. This leaf, also marked "*Trint*," is in the possession of Mr. Malcolm in London.* Another sheet Dürer devoted to that memorable narrow pass through which so many Germans once passed with beating

* Exhibited at the Burlington Fine Arts Club in 1869, and wrongly described in the Catalogue (No. 129) as "The Castle of Nuremberg."

hearts on their way to the south, and which was so often drenched with German blood. In the foreground rises a rock crowned with a fortress, the walls and towers of which reach down into the valley, where a small town is visible to the right, and olive trees encircling the base of the rock. Above, in Dürer's hand, is inscribed, "*Fenedier klawsen*" (Venetian passes). This drawing is in the Louvre. Another mountain fortress, with grey walls, formerly in the Hausmann collection, and now the property of Dr. Blasius, bears the inscription, "*Ein welsch schloss*" (An Italian castle). It is done in green and red water-colours, and the mountain itself is only slightly sketched. The Bremen Kunsthalle possesses a similar rocky fastness, without a name, surrounded by hills, woods, and water; it is more powerfully coloured, and the foliage is done with body colour. Another hill fortress in the Louvre is painted on parchment, those hitherto mentioned being all on paper.

Several very curious and detailed studies of trees, which probably also formed part of his travelling sketch-books, are highly characteristic of Dürer's eye for colour. For instance, a tall lime-tree, on a projecting bastion, the parapet of which slopes off to the left, but is out of drawing. In the background, on the stone bench, parallel with the wall, is the figure of a man dressed in black, perhaps a scholar. Another stands beneath the tree, the foliage of which is bluish green, with grey shadows. This fine tempera painting on parchment is in the possession of Herr Alfred R. von Franck, at Gratz. A companion to it, with three similar trees, in the Kunsthalle at Bremen, is executed in exactly the same manner. Dürer exhibits a broader and more picturesque treatment in a study of two groups of trees in full foliage, formerly in the Hausmann collection, and now in the possession of Dr. Blasius. It is on paper, in very thin water-colour. From the distant ranges of bright hills

to the sunny meadows dotted with shrubs in the foreground, there is such a rich gradation of green tints that it seems actually like a study of the effects of light. The whole thing is all so well balanced, so freshly and boldly dashed off, that one feels at home in it, and forgets the centuries that intervene between the taking of the sketch and the moment of looking at it.

These landscape studies from nature belong to those of Dürer's works in which, outstripping his contemporaries, and soaring far above the aspirations of his own epoch, he reached that unconstrained realism which is in all ages equally intelligible. They have in them something of the joyousness with which a German citizen must have stepped forth from his high walls under the expanse of God's high heaven. Something of that Easter-day feeling which Goethe depicts in *Faust*, of that delight of mediæval humanity in the rediscovery of nature, after such a long period of privation. In Dürer the modern man awakes to see the reflection of his moods in landscape scenery, and to find in its contemplation a spring of invigorating influences.

Dürer's travels led him to a more careful observance of the ever varying natural phenomena around him, and unfolded to him the enjoyment to be derived from the contemplation of every simple object in nature in its calm and regular existence. Whatever he learnt from nature, when away from home, left him no rest on his return. The involuntary leisure of the first few years was diligently devoted to short excursions for study in the neighbourhood of his native town. Much as the Germans may be attracted by distant countries, Dürer was neither the first nor the last who learned to love his own country truly when far away from it. To this love he has given expression in a series of charming sketches of Nuremberg and its environs. These correspond fully with those done during his travels, and

are mostly executed in water-colour, with the same assiduous care, and marked in the same way with the name of the place. Among them is a view of the west side of Nuremberg, taken from the Hallerwiese (Haller Meadow), at the mouth of the Pegnitz. From the low ground, the eye, looking northwards, takes in the Thiergärtner Gate, or rather the square tower of what was then the New Gate, on the right of which project the city walls, whilst in the background, on the left, a wooded height reaches up to the group of houses near the church of St. John. The foreground is vigorous in colour, the sky and distance are delicately toned down, and the whole is a model of airy perspective. This little picture, which is on an oblong sheet and bears the inscription, "*Nörnperg*," is preserved in the Kunsthalle at Bremen. Another sheet, of the same shape, also in the Kunsthalle, marked "*Sant Johans kirchen*" (St. John's Church), shows, to the right, the chapel, and the graveyard where Dürer was eventually laid to rest; to the left, a row of houses, surrounded by trees; in the background, a hillock. The buildings are carefully drawn throughout, and dark in colour; the sky and ground are left white. In the neighbourhood of St. John's, near the Hallerwiese, there still stands the Weidenmühle (Willow Mill), of which Dürer has left us a drawing, which is indeed among his most charming ones. This water-colour was bequeathed to the Print Room of the Louvre by the Abbé de Marolles, and has somewhat suffered from exposure to the light. A long, narrow wooden bridge unites the grassy and willow-clothed banks of the Pegnitz, on which a dozen various-sized buildings are huddled together; to the right, a meadow and two tall lime-trees, whose bright green spring foliage nearly reaches the ground; above, a warm evening sky, as after sunset, and dark purple-edged clouds. With the exception of a bit to the right, which is only sketched in, the whole is executed

with a delicacy, sharpness, and finish which cannot be surpassed, and reminds us of a photograph. At the top, in Dürer's hand, is the inscription, "*Weydenmüll.*" The "*Drahtziehmühle,*"* on a whole sheet, executed with the same finish, forms a fitting companion to it. The water, visible between the wooden and timber-bonded houses, and in which a lansquenet is watering his horse, seems to be the Pegnitz; and if so we can recognise on the left one of the gate-towers and suburbs of Nuremberg. The varied rising ground in the distance is dotted over with villages, wooden fences, and groups of trees. We may remark here that in one of his first letters from Venice Dürer wrote that the "*Trottzicher*" had brought his mother twelve florins. Whether the synonymous word *Drahtzieher*† refers to the name of a family or a trade, we leave others to decide. Less perfect and partly unfinished is a coloured pen sketch in the Kunsthalle at Bremen, of "*Kalk rewt,*" i.e. Kalkreut, a hamlet of Nuremberg, near Heroldsberg. The large trees in the village are merely broadly indicated in round masses, but the varied tints of green are worthy of notice. In the background there is a range of mountains; the sky, and in parts the roofs and walls of the houses are left white. Another more finished water-colour view of the distant environs of Nuremberg with fir-trees, and water with ships on it, is in the British Museum. It is executed with great delicacy and truthfulness of colour, and there is a powerful contrast between the light horizon and the dark clouds above.‡ The same collection also possesses a charming landscape with a *Weiherhaus*, at Gleishammer, east of Nuremberg. The *Weiherhäuser* were little country-houses, which, being surrounded by water, offered great security,

* "*Trotzichmüll.*" No. 334 in the Posonyi-Hullot collection; now in the Berlin Museum.

† *Drahtzieher* = a wire maker or drawer.

‡ Waagen, *Treasures of Art*, i. 231.

and were often, in time of war, made use of by the town council to quarter soldiers in. A high-storied house of this kind, with a weather-cock on the top, is here represented in the background, on a small island, and surrounded by bushes and willows. It is faintly reflected in the smooth surface of the water, which reaches up to the foreground of the picture. To the left a boat is moored, and on the right the reedy banks stretch away into the distance. All is bathed in the warm light of the setting sun, only on the right a few dark clouds hang over this pleasant summer evening landscape, which has filled Waagen with enthusiasm for Dürer's versatility, and led him to compare him to Artus van der Neer, while, however, acknowledging that the composition of the old German master is much the more poetical. Dürer has written at the back of this water-colour, "*Weier Haws.*" The same subject is introduced, in reverse, in his engraving of the Virgin with the monkey, and we are tempted to regard the water-colour sketch as a study for the engraving, only that in the latter the house is taken from a higher and more distant point of view, and is more elaborately finished.

Although in most of these drawings the buildings are generally more or less in the foreground, there is no attempt at that style of architectural painting afterwards in vogue, nor is there any analogy between them and Wolgemut's stiff representations of towns in Schedel's Chronicle. They are not monumental edifices, but plain homely buildings, isolated or in groups, and so blended with the surrounding scenery that they seem to be a part of the landscape like the hills, trees, and shrubs. Just as human dwellings give meaning and importance to a country, and as the traces of human activity impart a homelike aspect to it, in like manner Dürer embraced nature from that wider point of view which includes all human life and work. It was this

intimate connection between nature and man's existence which inspired the master and his productions, and which explains the fact of his finding welcome subjects for study in the somewhat monotonous environs of his native city, but not within its encircling walls. There is a slightly coloured sketch in the Albertina, which seems to disprove this assertion, but in reality it rather confirms it, for only that end of the town where the Pegnitz flows out under the walls into the open country is represented. It is a view of the old Trockensteg by the Hallerthürlein (Haller Portal), a well-built, covered wooden bridge—now replaced by a chain one—taken from the left bank, where the tallow factory stands. Behind the bridge, above the pillar in the middle of the stream, rises the tower called the Schleierthurm, afterwards destroyed, and on each side of it are the casemates of the Frohnfeste, supported on the arches of the bridge. On the opposite bank is a mill among tall thick groups of trees, above which rises a slender gate-tower in the farther distance. The flowing waters, reflecting the arched foundation of the city walls, are astonishingly rendered, considering the slightness of the material employed.

But the Berlin Museum possesses a coloured sketch of Dürer's which is immeasurably broader in treatment than any of the drawings hitherto noticed.* It is merely dashed off with the brush, chiefly in brown tints, and represents a shallow valley in Franconia, stretching away out of sight to the left; on the right it slopes more steeply, and in the hollow lies a little village embedded in trees, a few of which are also dotted about singly. The drawing, which is taken from an elevated point of view, must have been the work of an instant, for the colour can hardly have had time to dry

* It was formerly in the Posonyi-Hullot collection, No. 335 in the catalogue.

before it was finished. The painter has here sought to devote to a more important subject the purely picturesque qualities he had as yet only bestowed on small detail studies. If further proof were needed to show that Dürer was a landscape painter in the modern sense, and one, too, of rare skill and talent, this sketch would convince us of it.

As a rule, the broadly handled, less vividly coloured landscape studies are of later date than those which are brighter in tone and of more elaborate and miniature-like finish. But even the rapidly washed-in water-colour sketches cannot have been done much after the beginning of the sixteenth century. Amongst the latest are those sketches marked with a date; as, for instance, one of brown rocks, dated 1506, in the British Museum; and another belonging to Dr. Blasius, and formerly in the Hausmann collection, of a wall of rock with leafless creepers, painted in 1510 in Indian ink and bistre. A similar rock study in the Kunsthalle at Bremen shows the same handling, but the red, green, yellow, and whitish-grey tints are more varied in tone; on the right, above, is a spring, the background is dotted with trees, and at the top, in Dürer's writing, is the word, "*Steinpruch*" (Stone Quarry). The same inscription is to be found on another sheet in this collection; but this sketch is merely drawn with the pen in Indian ink, and then washed over with the brush so as to make the ink run. Dürer's predilection for steep rocky precipices is remarkable. These lofty unchanging masses, with their irregular sharp outlines, accorded well with his bold, determined, and at times peculiar character. He attempts them under every aspect, from the rather elaborated study of which we have given an engraving to the one just mentioned of a stone quarry, where the natural character of the strata is admirably rendered. He is also fond of introducing stones and rocks into his compositions, and does so with a truth that has hardly been surpassed.

Another sketch belonging to the year 1510 is a careful one done with the pen, in the possession of Professor Bertini at Milan, representing a small village in the environs of Nuremberg with a church tower, and in the middle a pond with geese. It is drawn in accordance with all the laws of perspective, and in this respect, as compared with earlier drawings, shows a conscious assurance. The sheet is marked out in squares, and on the left, halfway up, the point of sight is indicated by a small circle. On it is written in Dürer's own hand, "*hab acht auffs awg*"—"Pay attention to the point of sight."

The farther Dürer advanced, and the nearer he approached the height of his creative power, the less attention did he bestow on landscape study. Not that he ever ceased to be sensible of its charm or its legitimate artistic qualities, —even on his journey to the Netherlands, in 1520, he says that the town of Mittelburg was "a delightful subject to draw"—but the lyric frame of mind had ceased to prevail in him as soon as his energies were directed towards the highest ideas of humanity. He displays his thoroughly national love of research by continually setting himself fresh problems, and never resting until he believes that he has done everything within his power to solve them. Thus he shunned no trouble, and did not think the smallest study from nature too insignificant, so long as he accomplished his aim. He now no longer carried his brush and colour-box; but contented himself with pen and pencil, which in former years only occasionally satisfied his wants: as, for instance, in the pen drawing of a wood scene on the Schmausenbuck, near Nuremberg, with two monks in the foreground sitting by a stone fountain. This sketch belongs to the collection of the late Baron von Dräxler, at Vienna. Once he felt conscious of having conquered the difficulties of landscape painting, it seemed easy enough to give the barest sketch its garb of colour. In testimony of this, he him-

self put down in a small book his experiences in landscape painting. Unfortunately this work is lost, and we only know of its existence from Pirkheimer's appendix to the *Proportionslehre* (Treatise on Proportion).

Dürer well knew that he could only grasp the character of a landscape by investigating its separate details, and that he could only enter into its sentiment by means of colour. In this spirit he devoted himself to the study of nature with his whole heart. He was very fond, especially in his early works, of introducing landscapes into his backgrounds whenever the subject and the taste of the day permitted it. Even though there was as yet no market for pure landscape, it always held an independent and legitimate place in Dürer's estimation. We may judge how powerfully he must have been drawn towards it by the fact of his devoting himself to it with so much diligence, without any prospect of gain, and at a time when his earnings were of real importance to him. The great school for his development as a landscape painter was the period of his travels, during which he was necessarily always in contact with nature. It gives us a strange feeling if we picture to ourselves the German youth, going joyfully on his way over hill and dale, with heart and eye ever ready for each new impression. If he is footsore and weary, or if some view has attracted his eye, he pauses to rest, and each pause produces a picture. Countless people had passed the same way before Dürer, but before him none had the eye to see these forms and colours, none the hand to arrest them on paper. If those that came after succeeded more easily, the chief merit belongs none the less to Dürer of being the founder of modern independent landscape painting.

Such studies, of which, no doubt, we only possess a small portion, enable us to comprehend the wealth of landscape subjects which Dürer has, as it were, scattered over his

historical compositions. They lent a peculiar charm to his paintings as well as to his engravings and woodcuts, and formed that part of his works which called forth the most undivided admiration from all quarters, nowhere more than from contemporary Italian painters, who many of them, including Raphael himself, took pleasure in making use of and borrowing from Dürer's landscapes. Almost a century earlier Hubert and Jan van Eyck had begun to borrow from nature for the backgrounds of their pictures, instead of filling them in with gold. Dürer went a step farther in faithfully copying the actual landscape down to the minutest details, and was thus the first to make it a special part of his compositions, though more for his own pleasure than that of others. He devoted himself to nature with such entire self-forgetfulness that even now any one who looks at his landscapes can enter into the feelings which he himself experienced. Albrecht Altdorffer was the only one of his followers in Upper Germany who, for a time, trod in his footsteps; the later Nuremberg masters, Hirschvogel, Lautensack, and others, soon degenerated into mannerism, and it was not till more than a century had elapsed that the Dutch painters returned to Dürer's simple contemplation of nature, and produced the greatest successes that landscape painting has achieved.

CHAPTER VI.

MARRIAGE AND DOMESTIC LIFE.

"The piercing deadly venom of sharp slanderous tongues is ever ready to burst forth."— DÜRER.



DÜRER'S personal appearance at the time of his travels is well known to us through his portrait of himself in the year 1493. Goethe, who saw it in the collection of the Hofrath Beireis in Helmstädt, in 1805, gives the following description of it: "I considered as invaluable Albert Dürer's portrait of himself, painted in 1493, when he was in his twenty-second year. It is a bust half life-size, showing the two hands and the fore-arms. Crimson cap with short narrow strings, the throat bare to below the collar-bone, an embroidered shirt, the folds of the sleeves tied underneath with peach-coloured ribbons, and a blue-grey, fur-edged cloak with yellow laces, make up a dainty dress befitting a well-bred youth. In his hand he significantly carries a blue eryngo, called in German '*Mannstreu.*' He has a serious, youthful face, the mouth and chin covered with an incipient beard. The whole splendidly drawn; the composition simple, grand, and harmonious; the execution perfect, and in every way worthy of Dürer; though the colour is very thin, and has cracked in some places." * This

* *Goethe's Werke*, xxxi. p. 216. See Heller, p. 176.

portrait, already at that time damaged, has since been transferred, from the large sheet of parchment on which it was painted, to canvas, and thoroughly restored. Only in the lower part, and the hands, can the original broad, easy painting and vigorous drawing be seen. The head, three-quarter profile to the right, is in exactly the same position as in the 1484 portrait of himself as a boy, and there is altogether a great likeness between the two, which is increased by the fair hair being cut irregularly and hanging down over the neck in the same way, and by the same side look in the eyes, which are a good deal damaged. But there is a slight appearance of down on the chin and lips, and the formed features and already aquiline nose remind us more of the portrait of 1497. On his head Dürer has a low red cap falling backwards, with a fringed tassel on the crown. Whether this portrait is identical with the one which the older inventories of the Imhoff collection describe as "*Albrecht Dürers Contrafect macht er* 1492, *hat auf dem Kopf ein alte Kappen*"—"Albert Dürer's portrait done in 1492, he has on his head an old-shaped cap," is not certain; but it would not be too much to assume that the copyist had mistaken a 3 for a 2.

It is not known where Dürer painted this remarkable portrait of himself. In none of his other portraits does he appear so carefully and gaily dressed. The vandyke-edged shirt is arranged in careful folds, the seams of which are embroidered in gold, and is fastened with cross ribbons; the grey jacket is doubly edged with yellow braid, and the sleeves are slashed and faced with red. It is the usual dress of a dandy in those days, and consequently rather a strange one for a journeyman painter to wear. He could not have found opportunities for such finery everywhere; and after all it is possible that the picture may have been done in Venice, where we know that in 1506 Dürer took pleasure in pro-

viding himself with fashionable clothing. But setting aside the question of where it was painted, we cannot help inquiring what motive Dürer had for representing himself with such care; and in this aspect the picture itself appears to tell us a part of the history of its origin. The young gallant holds in his hand a blue eryngo, and over his head, beside the date 1493, is inscribed in Gothic letters the proverb:

"Mein sach die gat, Als es oben schtat."*

Thus the youth commends his lot to heaven. Is it not likely that the picture had a purpose far beyond any pleasure felt by young Dürer in his personal appearance? Involuntarily we arrive at this idea when, after telling us how he returned at his father's bidding in the end of May 1494, he thus continues: "And when I arrived home, Hans Frey entered into negotiations with my father, and gave me his daughter Agnes, with a dowry of two hundred florins, and the wedding was celebrated on the 14th of July 1494." In however dry and business-like a manner marriages were transacted in those days, the few weeks that intervened between Dürer's return and his marriage could hardly have sufficed even for the necessary arrangements between the parents. The probability, therefore, is that already in Dürer's absence the prudent father had begun his negotiations with Hans Frey, and recalled his son when they were approaching a conclusion. This portrait of 1493 may therefore have been intended to aid the father's wooing, partly by its testimony to the ability of the young man, partly by recalling his features to the memory of his future bride. Hence the trustful proverb, the symbolical flower, still called "*Mannstreu*," and hence also the unusual choice

* "My affairs follow the course ordained above."

of parchment for so large a picture, as being more easy of transport than a wood panel.

The "parchment marriage contract" mentioned at the settlement of Dürer's will in 1530 has till now not been discovered; but the father must no doubt have had every reason to congratulate himself and his son on so advantageous a connection. The Freys were not artisans, but belonged to one of those respectable (*ehrbar*) merchant families in Nuremberg who, without having any share in the oligarchical government of the city, were generally regarded as of equal rank with the class from which the council were chosen.* Hans Frey was an esteemed and wealthy man, holding property both in and outside the town, as, for instance, a farm near the Wöhrder Thor. His wife Anna, the mother of Agnes, came of one of the highest of those families who were eligible for the council, and was a daughter of Wilhelm Rummel and Kungund Haller. But with all his forethought in arranging this marriage, the elder Dürer would hardly have gained his end so easily but for the high personal worth of his son. Though Dürer may not have met his future bride at dances or other festivities, he must have had plenty of other opportunities of seeing her, for his work led him daily past the house of Sebald Frey, the cousin of Hans, where Agnes, no doubt, often was. When Sebald Frey died, he bequeathed a legacy to his cousin and his two daughters; but there must have been some doubt as to its value, for after Hans Frey had renounced his claim to it, he appeared in court on the 14th of May 1498, with his two daughters, Agnes, Albert Dürer's wife, and the unmarried one, Katharina, and with Albert, his son-in-law, and on behalf of himself and his heirs resigned it in favour of Brigitta, the widow of the deceased.†

* G. W. K. Lochner, *Anzeiger für Kunde deutscher Vorzeit*, 1866, col. 57.

† Nuremberg town archives, lit. 3, fol. 14 a.

Dürer's father-in-law appears to have been no ordinary man, but he never succeeded in giving a definite direction to his lively imagination and his energy for work. The favourable circumstances attending his career, combined with the undefined social position of his family, seem only to have increased his natural want of stability. With all the multiplicity of his occupations, he found no lasting satisfaction in any, but he earned the respect and confidence of his fellow-citizens to a high degree. After he had been made *Genannter* of the great council, the lucrative post of steward or master of the town-hall was conferred upon him, but he shortly afterwards, in 1501, gave it up. When Wilhelm Schlüsselfelder, to whom Mathäus Landauer had bequeathed the care of the House of the Twelve Brethren (*Zwölfbrüderhaus*),* founded by him, and dedicated to All Saints, rejected the post, it was offered to Hans Frey by the council on the 5th of March 1515, but he also declined it. On the 3rd of December, however, in the same year, he agreed to undertake the honorary treasurership of the beggars' poor-box in the debtors' prison, and Wilibald Pirkheimer, by order of the council, delivered to him the keys which had hitherto been entrusted to the guardian of the poor (*Oberbettelrichter*). But what is more remarkable is that, in 1507, Hans Frey appears as a mounted soldier amongst the small squadron despatched by the council to accompany Maximilian on his projected journey to Rome, for the purpose of being crowned.† When the idea of this journey was first started, in 1506, Dürer also seems to have thought of joining the cavalcade.‡ That Hans Frey, no longer a young man, should voluntarily take part in such an expedition appears so strange that one is almost tempted to

* Some account of this institution is given in Chapter XII.

† Baader. report in the *Anzeiger für Kunde der Vorzeit*, 1870, col. 42.

‡ *Dürers Briefe*, p. 15.

think there must have been another person of the same name. Such a story, however, may well serve to complete our picture of the man whose eccentric character cannot have failed to influence Dürer.

Hans Frey was a man of most varied abilities, and it is only from Neudörffer's account of his favourite tastes that posterity have got to look upon him as a musician and mechanician by profession. Neudörffer writes: "He was clever at everything. He understood music, and was famous for his harp-playing. He was skilful at throwing up water by means of compressed air, and could manufacture in copper all kinds of figures of men and women, hollow inside, and so arranged that when air was blown into them the water with which they had been previously filled spouted out of holes in their heads and elsewhere. These fountains could be placed in any room as a decoration, and one is still to be seen at the house of Herr Hans Ebner." Hans Frey's fountain appears to have been an improved kind of "Hero's ball." Dürer was not above helping his father-in-law in these odd amusements, for he gave him sketches of figures for his fountains. There is a coloured pen-drawing, probably intended for this purpose, of an awkward, grinning *Gänsemännchen* (little man with a goose), sitting above the basin of a fountain, with the water spouting from his mouth, eyes, and ears, and also from the goose in his arms and from a frog close by.* A generation later Pankraz Labenwolf carried out the same idea in a standing figure, with two geese spouting water, which he executed in bronze for the fountain behind the Frauenkirche, and which is one of

* The sketch is in the Ambras collection at Vienna. It is broadly and boldly done on paper with the water-mark of an ox-head; and the twining plants round the socle of the basin remind us of Wolgemut's manner. Freih. v. Sacken, *Mittheilungen de Wiener Centralcommission*, viii. p. 128, No. 10.

the characteristic features of Nuremberg. There is another centre-piece for the table of this kind, but in much worse taste, the base and cover being overladen with figures, and with jets of water spouting out in all directions. Two large coloured drawings of this fountain, which were done for or from a work of old Frey's, give us an idea of what these toys were like; one is in the Albertina, and the other in the British Museum; but neither reveals the hand of Dürer, and they are at most the productions of one of his earlier pupils.

As to his music, Hans Frey may probably in his younger days have figured as a citharœdus or harp player in Corpus Christi processions and on other similar occasions, but he certainly never exercised his art in public. No doubt he cultivated it all the more zealously in his family circle and with his friends, thereby awakening a taste for it in Dürer also, as evidenced by the particular attention the latter paid during his stay at Antwerp in 1520–21 to the best lute-players there. Perhaps the fantastic representation of a winged lute-player by Dürer, dated 1497, was a portrait of his father-in-law; at any rate, there are grounds for thinking so.* A gaunt, elderly, and beardless man, with short curly hair, a powerful forehead, long, pointed nose, and deep-set eyes, is represented in a listening attitude, his head turned to the left, and looking down, whilst his fingers stir the strings in the approved fashion. The figure, originally sketched in a sitting posture, stands by the parapet of a wall, on which the lute rests, and is dressed in a curious full robe, drawn in at the waist, and has a cloth twisted turban-fashion round the head. A pair of powerful, outspread wings rise above the shoulders. Though the whole apparition is a conceit, which perhaps owed its origin to some joke

* This charming finished drawing in silver point heightened with white belongs to Mr. William Mitchell.

like that related by Goethe of Mignon, it nevertheless produces a gloomy impression, which is deepened by the look of ineffaceable melancholy about the mouth of the, in other respects, nobly fashioned countenance.

It should be observed that this remarkable drawing dates from the year preceding the appearance of the Apocalypse, just the time when Dürer conceived those powerful, bony, beardless male figures we are first introduced to in his series of woodcuts representing the destroying angels. It remains open to surmise whether this portrait of the lute-player was preparatory to the creation of those types, or whether its strange attributes owed their origin to the type Dürer had already conceived in his own mind of those male angels. The intimate connection of the two ideas is at any rate unquestionable.

It would be more difficult, certainly, to prove the identity of the model used for Mr. Mitchell's drawing with Hans Frey. Still it is always worth while to group together in an impartial and unbiassed manner facts connected with art as they present themselves after a long examination for and against. And even should the picture we thus get of Dürer and those immediately about him be incorrect or dim, the key-note which gives colour and harmony to the whole may still have been rightly caught. At all events, such a mode of procedure suits the incompleteness of our sources of information, which doom us again and again to the alternative of choosing between colourless exactitude and showy hypothesis, when both are alike unsatisfactory.

In any case, we do not gather from what we know of Hans Frey that he was specially bent upon adding to his possessions; and yet, at his death, on the 21st of November 1523, he bequeathed no inconsiderable fortune to his two daughters, Agnes, the wife of Dürer, and Katharina, the younger one, who was afterwards married to Martin Zinner,

including 455 florins in cash, an unusually large sum for a man in his position to have to leave in those times. At "the amicable division" of the paternal inheritance, agreed upon by the two sisters according to the will, on the 14th of December 1523, "in the presence and with the approval" of their husbands, it appeared that Dürer's wife had already received a considerable amount in advance during her father's lifetime. Out of a sum of 1117 florins, therefore, only 370 florins fell to her share, whilst her sister received 747 florins.*

It is probable that Dürer constantly received substantial help from his wife's parents, with whom he seems to have lived on most intimate terms. He carefully notes the death of "his beloved mother-in-law, the wife of Hans Frey," on the 29th of September 1521, as also that of his "dear father-in-law, who had been ill six years, and had suffered incredible reverses in the world." † At his wife's death, Hans Frey had made use of the permission accorded on June 16, 1520, to all the nobles (*Ehrbare*), to place gravestones of their own in the burial-ground of St. John's. To this day, besides the inscription, "*Der Freyen Begrebtnuss*"—"Burial-place of the Freys," and the date 1521, the stone bears the united arms of the Frey and Rummel families. It covers the vault now marked No. 649, which was afterwards to become famous as the resting-place also of Dürer's mortal remains.

Hans Frey had no children except the daughters already mentioned; at any rate, they were the only ones who outlived him. Katharina, the younger of the two sisters, did not marry until after 1503. Her husband, Martin Zinner by name, was, it seems, a rich widower. What his trade

* Nuremberg town archives, cons. 31, fol. 113 b.

† *Dürers Briefe*, p. 75. Lochner, in the *Anzeiger für Kunde der Vorzeit*, 1866, p. 57, and in *Personennamen in Dürers Briefen aus Venedig*, Nuremberg, 1870, p. 12 et seq.

was is not known, but his family were chiefly tin-smiths. On the 1st of April 1513 he was made *Gassenhauptmann*,* and Dürer probably referred to him in his first letter from Venice,† when he says that his wife can, if necessary, get money from her brother-in-law. Katharina, who, like her sister, was childless, was left a widow before Agnes, and eventually inherited the Dürer house from her. Her name is mentioned for the last time at the sale of that house on the 9th of May 1542.‡ If family likeness be not deceptive, the portrait of this sister-in-law is to be found among Dürer's sketches. There is one, dated 1503, in the Print Room of the Berlin Museum—the head of a young and smiling woman, looking to the right, sketched in charcoal; though the face is somewhat full, the nose and mouth are delicate; but the eyelids droop heavily, a very striking peculiarity, which recurs in a life-size head of a rather portly, elderly woman in a drawing of Dürer's in the British Museum,§ where the eyelids look as if they were paralysed, and the eyes are almost closed. This drawing, which is in chalk, on green paper, and is much injured, evidently represents the same person as the other, only older; indeed it bears the date 1522; there is also an inscription, the important part of which is illegible. The likeness to Dürer's wife is so striking that Woltmann believes the portrait to be intended for her, and tries to prove it by the help of the mutilated inscription.‖ It may well, therefore, be that of her sister Katharina. That it is

* See p. 44.

† *Dürers Briefe*, p. 4.

‡ Lochner, *Personennamen*, p. 20 et seqq.

§ No. 49 in the volume of Dürer's drawings.

‖ Waagen, *Treasures of Art*, i. p. 230. Woltmann, *Jahrbücher für Kunstwerke*, iv. p. 249. This opinion, however, is disproved by the distinctive character of the head, and the way in which the eyelids droop over the pupil, as though the eye could not keep open, whilst in all the best portraits of Agnes the eyes are wide open.

the likeness of a relation, or some near connection, is proved partly by the recurrence of the same face after twenty years' interval, partly by the mutilated inscription on the drawing in the British Museum,* partly also by the repetition of the same weary eyelids in the picture of a young girl in the Berlin Museum.† To be sure, this portrait, a life-size bust in charcoal, remarkably true and life-like, is dated 1515, so that the fat-cheeked maiden represented in it, with her broad headband and thin plaits, must be a different person from the woman in the other drawing; but the somewhat disordered dress is enough to show that she was not a stranger, whilst the sleepy eyes and other points of resemblance are strong arguments in favour of her having been a near relation, perhaps a daughter of Katharina Zinner, who died early, and of whose existence no mention has come down to us. Scanty as the foundation may be on which these conjectures rest, yet they are so far sound as to justify us in regarding these admirable portrait-sketches of Dürer's as likenesses of persons who were constantly in his house.

Looking at the conditions under which Dürer married, and bearing in mind the circumstances of the time and place, he made what in these days would be called a brilliant match. To her social position and fortune, his bride added great physical advantages. This is proved by a number of drawings which have come down to us of her by his hand. One very indistinct and hasty pen sketch in the Albertina, inscribed, "*Mein Angnes*," dates from the earliest days of their married life. The young wife is represented in her working apron, seated at a table, with her mouth resting on the back of her hand as if asleep.

* " . . . hab . . . Albrecht Dürer noch . . . hausfrawen conterfett."

† Formerly in the Posonyi-Hullot collection, No. 329 in the catalogue.

It looks more as if it had been done in fun than with any deliberate intention. Little can be seen of the face except the sharp prominent nose and the high forehead, partly concealed by the cap. The same disadvantageous position of the head is repeated in a small bust of very nearly the same date, and of the same size, in the Bremen Kunsthalle; but the drawing is carefully executed on grey prepared paper with the silver point, and heightened with white; the face is the same narrow, girlish one, with the straight nose.

But how differently Frau Agnes looks a few years later! In 1500 Dürer painted a full-length water-colour portrait of her, wherein she appears as a spruce, modest housewife, with bent head and downcast eyes, in a white cap and apron, a richly trimmed green dress, with a small red shawl, bordered with black, over her shoulders, a well-filled leather pouch at her girdle, and a large pocket-handkerchief in her hand. This water-colour is in the Ambrosian Library at Milan. Dürer used it as a sketch for one of the coloured costume pictures in the Albertina, to which he affixed the inscription, "*Also geht man in Häusern, Nürnberg*"—"This is how they dress in-doors at Nuremberg." It also proves that his wife must have sat for the two other companion costume pictures. The second of these represents a woman, enveloped in a large red cloak, lined with green, falling in numerous stiff, straight folds, with a blue damask gown edged with white fur showing beneath. She wears the peculiar headdress of the day, consisting of a cloth, stretched over a high framework; what can be seen of the face between it and the chin-cloth is insignificant, the painter having directed his exclusive attention to the costume; the only thing worth noticing about it is the fair auburn hair, just visible at the parting. Above, in Dürer's hand, are these words: "*Gedenkt mein in Euerem Reich*

1500. *Also geht man zu Nürnberg in die Kirchen.*"—"Remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom, 1500. This is how they go to church at Nuremberg." * Dürer has introduced this figure among the witnesses in the picture of the marriage of the Virgin, one of the series of woodcuts in his Life of the Virgin.† The third of these costume sketches is inscribed, "*Also gehen die Nürnberger Frauen zum Tanz,* 1500"—"This is how the Nuremberg women dress at the dance," and represents a woman in all her finery. There is the same yellowish cap, perhaps embroidered with gold, and meeting the tightly drawn chin-cloth; but the green dress, with its rich folds and long train, is slightly cut out on the shoulders, and fastened in front with a gold clasp. The sleeves are tight, and slashed at the elbow, the outer sleeve red, while from the shoulders hang large open sleeves, lined and edged with white fur, which either reached to the train or were held up over the arm. This style of dress shows in what a measured and stately way society must have danced in those days.‡ The technical execution of these drawings shows rare skill in the handling of water-colours. The mode is so far peculiar that the figures are first sketched in very lightly with the pen, the colours then laid on in several washes with the brush, the lights being left white; and finally, the outlines are retraced and strengthened with the pen. It is probably this kind of drawing which Dürer speaks of as "*mit halben färblein und gerissen*"—"half painted and half sketched," in the diary of his journey in the Netherlands.

* Mr. Malcolm of Poltalloch possesses a duplicate of this coloured drawing, of which there is also a copy in the British Museum.

† Bartsch, No. 82.

‡ These three figures are reproduced in Hefner-Alteneck's *Trachtenbuch*, iii. pl. 25 and 26; and there are coloured woodcuts of them in F. W. Bader's *Trachtenbilder von A. Dürer in der Albertina*, Vienna, 1871.

These three costume pictures, apart from the water-colour drawing at Milan, introduce us rather to the wardrobe of young Mistress Agnes than to herself; or at most only to her stately figure, which, however, with its peculiar shape and stiff carriage, looks strange to the changed taste of these days. Anyway, the history of the origin of these pictures throws some light upon the married life of the young pair. But Dürer has shown us what his wife was in the full bloom of her beauty in a pencil sketch dated 1504, and inscribed "*Albrecht Dürerin.*" * The drawing is most carefully done, but has, unfortunately, been very greatly injured by friction and perhaps damp. The clear, decided lines, however, render all the features plainly distinguishable, and their resemblance to those of the water-colour study in the Ambrosiana shows that we have here an authentic likeness. The position even, three-quarters to the left, is the same, only that the head seems straighter, and the eyes, wide open, look straight forward, or rather, if anything, a little upwards. The cap leaves a part of the high smooth brow and unusually arched eyebrows uncovered; the nose is well formed, slightly aquiline, with a rather prominent bridge; the full, voluptuous lips form a graceful, wave-like line, beneath which a little dimple and a small round chin, with just a suspicion of a double one, blend with the soft, plump cheeks. If we picture this woman to ourselves by the side of Dürer, as he has represented himself in the Munich portrait, we must own that a comelier pair probably never passed through the Bride's Door of St. Sebald.

And this stately couple were to become a subject of derision or pity to future generations! Their wedded discord was to

* This portrait, which is half-life-size, forms part of the Hausmann collection, which has been inherited by Dr. Blasius of Brunswick. The initial at the beginning of this chapter contains a small copy of the head reversed.

be as proverbial as that of Socrates and Xanthippe! For the uncritical and vulgar-minded historian to set on foot and amplify the current tradition about Dürer and his termagant wife, very slight evidence seems to have been sufficient. We know the envious spirit prevalent in those artistic literary circles with which for a very long time the transmission of all facts connected with the biography of artists exclusively rested. When they could not attack the works, they made up for it by attacking the characters of the old masters, who nearly all of them, from Perugino to Rembrandt, have had to suffer at their hands. But when, as in Dürer's case, the man's character was out of the reach of slander, it was necessary, in order to supply food for gossip, to make the wife out to be bad. In the same way Pinturicchio and Paul Potter are said to have been worried to death by their wives.

Closely connected with the fabulous story of Dürer's unhappy marriage is the current idea that he was poor, if not actually needy. The average man, who sets no value on anything beyond the gratification of his wants, and the enjoyment, perchance, of intellectual dainties, may experience peculiar pleasure and self-satisfaction in thinking that a creative genius has suffered from want. For he thus establishes an inferiority on the very points he himself is best able to appreciate, and by arrogating to himself the right to express his compassion, rids himself of the feeling, always a depressing one, of being in the presence of unapproachable and commanding greatness. Hence, no doubt, the delight which writers have taken in insisting on Dürer's poverty as well as on his conjugal slavery. No conscientious biographer can allow himself to pass by in silence erroneous views so long and generally held. Traces of the treatment the subject has ordinarily received continue to cling to it, and prevent it from being

properly judged of. It will be useful, therefore, to bring together at once all the authentic information handed down to us relating to Dürer's domestic life and his worldly circumstances.* By this means we shall avoid the necessity of having to interrupt the course of our narrative to go back to these unhappy questions.

Umbrage has very unjustly been taken at the way in which, as we have seen, Dürer speaks of his marriage. But in those days trust in God had distinct limits. It was the invariable rule that marriages should be arranged by the respective fathers, and it is a question whether our ancestors were worse off in consequence than their descendants, whose marriages are supposed to be made in heaven. Dürer, after his marriage, does not seem to have followed the custom in Nuremberg, of going to live with his wife's parents, but to have brought her to his father's house in the Unter der Vesten. They were living there at least in 1502, to judge from Dürer's account of his father's death, when he says that his "young wife ran quickly to his room to wake him, and he went down."† After having been the stay of his old sick father, he now had the sole charge of his mother and younger brothers and sisters. The maintenance of the whole family could have been no easy task for the young artist; as he himself writes, from Venice, in 1506: "As for myself, I should not want, but I find it too hard to feed so many; for no one throws his money away."‡ Up to that time, at any rate, Dürer could lay nothing by. Indeed, we know from his letters to Pirkheimer that he was in debt to him. But after his second visit to Venice, in 1506, a favourable change took place in his affairs. He tells us himself

* There is no need to stop and dispose of more recent mistakes or discuss idle conjectures. I have dealt with them in my article, *Dürer's Hausfrau*, in the *Zeitschrift für bild. Kunst*, iv. pp. 33 et seq., which also contains a facsimile of the sketch described at p. 140.

† *Dürers Briefe*, p. 134, l. 11.

‡ Ibid. p. 112, l. 10.

that he had never formerly had any opportunity of making large gains, but, on the contrary, had suffered great losses, partly through lending money which was never repaid, and partly through his men not giving in their accounts, as well as by the death of one of his agents in Rome, which prevented the recovery of the works entrusted to him for sale. All this had obliged him to run so deeply into debt that nearly the entire proceeds of his work at Venice went in freeing himself. But, notwithstanding, he was able, on settling his accounts, soon after his return in 1507, to enumerate as remaining to him "a fair stock of household furniture, good clothes, pewter utensils, good tools, bedding, chests, and cupboards, besides good colours, to the value of one hundred Rhenish florins."*

The nature of the losses spoken of is easily explained by the fact that Dürer at first followed his art as a craft. The people through whom his property chiefly suffered were the journeymen painters who did not fulfil their engagements, and the colporteurs, who were not always ready to render him the money they received for the wares, that is, the engravings and woodcuts entrusted to them to sell. A document exists, dated as early as August 12, 1500, relating to a business engagement of Dürer's of this kind. According to it, the painter Hans Arnold, whose brother Jacob had been commissioned by Albert Dürer to sell works of art for him, bound himself to give security to Dürer for the value of the same, and engaged to indemnify him for any loss or damage. The witnesses were Heinrich Zinner, probably a relation of his brother-in-law, and Anton Koburger, Dürer's godfather.† These colporteurs carried the goods about, not so much in Nuremberg as in the neighbouring towns and

* *Dürers Briefe*, p. 136, l. 9, and p. 239.

† Nuremberg town archives, cons. 6, fol. 536. Lochner, *Anzeiger für Kunde der Vorzeit*, 1867, xiv. p. 278.

places of pilgrimage, and they especially frequented fairs and church festivals. Sometimes a wandering journeyman or merchant, on condition of receiving a share in the profits, would take a number of these works of art to sell in foreign countries, like the agent whose death at Rome entailed such loss upon Dürer. At home, Dürer himself, or one of his family, attended to the sale of his works. Possibly it was for this object that Frau Agnes used to visit the fairs in different towns, and this would explain her presence in Frankfurt in the year 1506, just at the time of the fair. For Dürer writes from Venice on the 6th of January that he had given his wife twelve florins, and that she had received thirteen at Frankfurt.* In his letter, dated the 8th of March, he specially mentions "the fair now being held at Frankfurt";† and on the 2nd of April his wife is still away from home. Meantime, the Feast of Relics, so called from the public exposition of the imperial insignia and relics, was coming on. It fell on the 24th of April, and ever since the days of King Sigismund a great yearly fair had been held at the same time. Dürer writes to Pirkheimer with reference to this: "Tell my mother that she must hold a sale at the Feast of Relics. However, I expect my wife will be home by then. I have written to her all about it."‡ It is evident from Dürer's Venetian letters that he was in constant correspondence with his wife, but people who would pretend to have discovered from them anything about the existing relations between the pair must have read arbitrarily between the lines.

A glance at another side of Dürer's private life will be enough to teach us how careful we should be in making use of the uncertain, incomplete sources of information afforded by these lively letters, written under the influence

* *Dürers Briefe*, p. 4, l. 21. † Ibid. p. 9, l. 24. ‡ Ibid. p. 12, l. 13.

of so many varying circumstances and moods. Were there not authentic proof to the contrary, we might have gathered from the general tone of his letters that Dürer had returned from Venice in 1507, if not quite empty-handed, at least with very small gains. Much of this, however, may be set down to his over-quick imagination, and a certain homely love of grumbling common in his class. How, too, could Dürer ever have imagined that the unconsidered words which he had written off-hand to his friend in some careless or reckless mood would be weighed in the balance and their exactness minutely criticised?

The fact is that Dürer did a very good business in Venice, for directly after his return he was in possession of a considerable sum of money, and the way in which he disposed of it is characteristic. When he had paid his debts, he determined to extinguish the mortgage which the Pfinzing family had on his house in the Unter der Vesten, and which existed at the time that his father bought it. The year before he sent his mother from Venice, through Sebastian Imhoff, money to pay the yearly interest of 4 Nuremberg florins;* and on the 8th of May following he freed the house from the charge upon it by buying it from Sebald Pfinzing for the sum of 118 Rhenish florins. The value of the Nuremberg florin, as compared with that current in the Rhine countries, was as 10 to 11.† We must bear in mind the high value of money in those days, as may be seen from the price of the handsome two-storied stone houses in Nuremberg. The ordinary yearly income of a burgher was 50 florins, and those who had an income of a hundred, were considered very well off, while the highest office in the city, the imperial *Schultheiss* (mayor), was only worth 600 florins.

* *Dürers Briefe*, p. 4, l. 18. † Lochner, *Personennamen*, p. 43.

When once Dürer had achieved the first steps towards prosperity, he progressed steadily. In a short time, his father's house, which he was obliged to share with his brother Andreas, became too small for him. So, on the 14th June 1509, he bought from the property left by the astronomer Bernhard Walther the large corner house in the Zistelgasse, near the Thiergärtner Thor, "looking towards the rising sun." It is the present so-called "*Dürerhaus.*" The price was 275 Rhenish florins, "ready money in cash"; and there were besides two charges upon it, one of 8 Nuremberg florins a year, payable to the burgher Sebald Taucher, and the other an annual gift of 22 pounds to the altar of St. Erhard in St. Sebald's. The latter Dürer cleared off on the 15th January 1510, by a payment of 70 Rhenish florins to the exchequer (*Losungsstube*), which thenceforth became liable to defray the expenses of this pious foundation;* but the other mortgage, for which he paid interest to the amount of 8 Nuremberg florins, was not paid off till the 30th April 1526, when the house became free from all charges.† Besides, on the 3rd June 1512, he bought from Jacob Baner a garden near the Thiergärtner Thor, "in the Bamberger Strasse, by the Seven Crosses," for 90 Rhenish florins cash.‡ And as we know that in 1518 he bought his brother Andreas' share in the paternal house, he was at that date sole proprietor of two houses, which even to this day present a handsome appearance in Nuremberg.

This, then, was what Dürer called "his poverty," an expression which has hitherto been understood far too literally. The best insight into his money affairs, and his method of arranging them, and indeed into his whole way

* The contract is in the possession of M. H. Lempertz, at Cologne. *Organ für christl. Kunst*, 1865, No. 8. Lochner, *Personennamen*, p. 44. A pound is 30 pfennigs.

† Communicated by Lochner.

‡ Baader, *Jahrb. für Kunstwerke*, ii. p. 234.

of life, is afforded by his journal during the visit to the Netherlands. This journal also gives us the only authentic picture of his relations with his wife; and although it extends over nearly a whole year, we may look in vain for the smallest trace of discord or misunderstanding between the two. It is worth noting, too, without anticipating the account of that period, that Dürer, at the end of that journey, makes the same complaint, "of having, with all his toil, expenditure, selling, and other business, rather lost than gained in the Netherlands,"* a statement which, if we look closely into his affairs, is easily explained. He was at that time not so bent upon gain as he had been in former years. If he had any anxiety, it could only be about placing his money to the best advantage. For this purpose he applied to the council of his native town, and requested it to take the sum of 1000 florins, and allow him a yearly interest on it of 50 florins. His proposal was accepted, and the 1000 florins deposited in the exchequer in 1524, after the Festival of St. Gall.† It was the interest of this capital that Dürer's widow afterwards gave, a year before her death, to found a scholarship for theological students at the university of Wittenberg, to the great joy of Melanchthon, who wrote to V. Dietrich "that he thanked God for this aid to study, and that he had praised this good deed of the widow Dürer before Luther and others.‡

As Dürer's marriage was based on the principle of community of goods, and as he left no heirs and no will, his widow entered into possession of his whole fortune. According to a law passed by the town of Nuremberg in 1522, a

* *Dürers Briefe*, p. 129, l. 25.

† J. Baader, *Beiträge zur Kunstgeschichte Nürnbergs*, 1860, p. 8. *Dürers Briefe*, &c. p. 51.

‡ "De Durerianae viduae legato ago gratias Deo, quod studia respicit. Praedicavi id κατόρθωμα apud Lutherum et alios."—*Epp. Melanchthonis cura Jo. Sauberti*, l. iv. p. 78, and Will, *Gelehrtenlexicon*, i. p. 299.

fourth part of the property belonged to Dürer's two brothers, Andreas and Hans; but the widow was not bound to give it up before her death. She concluded, however, on the 9th of June 1530, an amicable settlement of partition with Andreas Dürer, the goldsmith, and with Caspar Altmülsteiner, called Zaymmacher, on behalf of Hans Dürer, then in the service of the King of Poland. The whole property having been valued at 6848 florins 7 pounds 24 pfennigs, of which the brothers' share of a fourth amounted to 1712 florins 1 pound 28 pfennigs 1 heller, Frau Agnes declared herself ready to make over to them, "of her own desire, and on account of the friendly feeling which she entertained for them, for the sake of her husband, and as her dear brothers-in-law," the sum of 1106 florins 6 pounds 22 pfennigs, that is, to each 553 florins 3 pounds 11 pfennigs, and to give them a mortgage for the remaining sum of 608 florins 2 pounds 24 pfennigs on the corner house in the Zistelgasse, called now the Dürer House.*

This voluntary agreement, called "Agnes Dürer's Division," is of special importance in the history of art, from the information which it affords as to the artistic property that Dürer left behind him, and what became of it. It seems all to have been appropriated by Andreas as his share, and to have been made away with by him to meet his pecuniary difficulties. At least Johann Neudörffer says that at Dürer's death "his brother Endres inherited all his expensive colours, his copperplates and wood blocks, as well as any impressions there were, and all his drawings besides."† Neudörffer was likely to know all about it, as

* Nuremberg town archives, cons. 39, fol. 164 b. Lochner, *Agnes Dürerin und ihre Schwäger*, in the *Anzeiger für Kunde deutscher Vorzeit*, 1869, p. 230.

† *Nachrichten von den vornehmsten Künstlern von* 1546, Nürnberg, 1828, p. 38.

his house in the Unter der Vesten was opposite Dürer's paternal house, where Andreas lived until he sold it in 1538. In the settlement of affairs, in 1530, it probably fell to him and his brother Hans conjointly.

The other house at the Thiergärtner Thor Frau Agnes retained possession of until her death; but the isolation seems to have been so unbearable to her there that she left it to live with strangers. Such at least is the inference to be drawn from the account written by Dr. Christoph Scheurl, in the year he died, 1542, for his nephew, Albrecht Scheurl, to whom "Albert Dürer, the German Apelles, and the first painter of his time," had stood godfather on the 3rd February 1525. His words are: "Agnes, widow of Dürer, and daughter of the pious Hans Frey, died on Sunday, the 28th of December 1539, at four o'clock in the morning, in a strange household." *

It was only after the legal valuation of the whole of Dürer's property, and the division of it on June 9, 1530, that his widow could have thought of parting with much of the now useless furniture. On this occasion, Agnes, who had shown so much goodwill and liberality towards her brothers-in-law, committed a mistake which in its consequences proved most fatal to her good and hitherto spotless name. Among the curiosities which Dürer had so diligently collected, there were several sets of stags' antlers, and among them a particularly beautiful pair, perhaps those which the elector Frederick the Wise had promised to Dürer, and of which Dürer had reminded him through Spalatin, in 1520, by saying "that he wanted to make two chandeliers out of them." †

Like other natural objects to which, as townsfolk, they were not accustomed, the people of Nuremberg had a par-

* *Archiv für zeichn. Künste*, Leipzig, iv. p. 26. † *Dürers Briefe*, p. 44, l. 3.

ticular fancy for stags' antlers. A proof of this is furnished by a contemporary engraving of the Nuremberg master M. Z. (Bartsch, 15), representing a chandelier formed by a pair of antlers. Other, and to us more interesting, testimony exists however in a coloured pen drawing of Dürer's, in the Ambras collection at Vienna, dated 1513. It represents a Siren, bearing on her breast an escutcheon, with an uprooted sapling upon it; in her hands she holds another small tree, the branches of which form a candelabra; and on her shoulders, instead of wings, are the antlers of a fallow-deer.* The birch sapling being in Pirkheimer's coat-of-arms, there is no doubt that the drawing was designed for him. That he was an especial admirer of such antlers is proved by the inventory taken of his property after his death, where it is stated that the stags'-horns which hung in the corridor were valued at 25 florins,† a sum which shows that they amounted to a considerable number.

But as the passion for collecting always grows stronger with age, Pirkheimer was never satisfied, and was constantly on the look-out for new and more perfect specimens. And, strange as it may sound, nothing in the whole of Dürer's property seems to have so strongly attracted the peevish, sick councillor as that beautiful pair of antlers. Therefore, when Frau Agnes sold them without any regard to his wishes, this irritable, plethoric personage fell into one of those paroxysms of rage to which he was subject all his life. It must have been in the first ebullition of his wrath that he wrote to Johann Tscherte, imperial architect, at Vienna, a letter, of which only the rough draft is still preserved in the public library at Nuremberg, and which

* Baron v. Sacken, *Dürers Zeichnungen in der Ambraser Sammlung, mit Abbildung*, in the *Mittheilungen der k. k. Central-Commission*, Wien, 1863, vol. viii. p. 123.

† Campe, *Zum Andenken Wil. Pirkheimers*, Nuremberg, p. 46.

certainly was never sent—at least not in that form.* From the contents of this long, prosy letter, it is clear that it could not have been indited before November 1530, and therefore not more than a few weeks before Pirkheimer's death, which occurred on the 22nd December of that year. He had for ten years suffered so greatly from corpulency and gout, and at last from stone, that he could not walk, but only ride, and in 1523 was obliged to resign his seat on the council. At that time the religious movement, among the first promoters of which he may justly be numbered, began to take far too stormy a course for him, and finally threatened his family interests and position. In spite of his extensive knowledge and rare endowments, Pirkheimer's standpoint was not exalted enough to render him invulnerable where his personal interests were at stake. Feeling repelled by the innovations, but unable to retrace his steps, the sick man became completely unsettled, and moodily retired more and more into seclusion, especially after Dürer's death. This event seems to have been a heavy blow to him, and to have increased his irritability in a high degree. Even the gentle Eoban Hesse had to experience this, for his friendly communications were for a long time totally ignored by Pirkheimer, merely because he had been told that the poet had somewhere expressed an unfavourable opinion about him. In this drear solitude, Pirkheimer may have turned with increased interest to all manner of small trifles, as indeed we often see great minds in the decline of their powers take a fancy to childish amusements.

His strange letter to Tscherte was in fact nothing but an attempt to indemnify himself for not having been able to get the antlers. That he was himself conscious of the ab-

* Published by Campe, in *Reliquien*, pp. 162–171. Compare Thausing, *Dürer's Hausfrau*, in the *Zeitschr. für bild. Kunst*, iv. pp. 81 et seq.

surdity of this fancy is probable from his prefacing his long-winded request with the words, "Though you may well suppose that such things can be of very little consequence to me." He then proceeds as if Hartmann had actually forced him to accept some antlers, for which he thought himself obliged to thank Tscherte, who had acted as his agent. But he is quite dissatisfied with these horns, as he explains further on: "Although I possess several, yet I should have liked to have had some very large and beautiful ones *which I know of here*" (Nuremberg); and he would, he adds, have had them mounted and hung in his gallery. He further exclaims *àpropos* of a lansquenet who had returned from Vienna having told him of some splendid specimens there, "If it were possible to get one or two fine pairs, I would not mind what I gave for them!" Where at Nuremberg he had seen these now historical antlers is not difficult to discover, for in the next sentence he lets out that "Albert (Dürer) too had some antlers, and among them one beautiful pair, *which I should dearly have liked;* but she (i.e. Dürer's wife) has secretly given them away, together with other beautiful things, for next to nothing." Hence, therefore, his boundless wrath against poor Agnes.

It will be clear to any one who reads this long letter to the very end, and not merely the beginning of it, that its sole purport is this trifling matter; every other subject is only mentioned incidentally. The first task of historical criticism is to test all evidence by the motives of the witness. The question is, not only whether he can speak the truth, but whether he will do so. His spirit of partisanship, his character, his frame of mind at the time, have to be taken into consideration; and all speak loudly against the passionate invectives of Pirkheimer.

Two years and a half had passed since Dürer's death. The events previous to that period were no longer so vividly

before him, while the refusal of the desired antlers must have been fresh in his memory. Agnes certainly had no forebodings of the direful tempest she had aroused against her good name through her probably unintentional neglect of Pirkheimer's wishes. He took occasion, at the very outset of his letter to Tscherte, to speak of Dürer's death, because he believes himself indebted for the architect's kindness to the latter's regard for their friend. The natural transition to the real matter in hand, namely, his desire for the antlers, is furnished by Dürer's wife, the indirect cause of this unsatisfied longing. Upon her he pours out the full measure of his wrath, and as he could bring no worse accusation against her to Dürer's friend than to say that upon her lay the guilt of the painter's much lamented death, he does so, in different terms, no less than four times in the same paragraph.

If the liar's maxim be true, that, to secure belief, exaggeration must not be driven too far, the improbabilities and contradictions in Pirkheimer's accusations are certainly calculated to arouse suspicion. These accusations refer principally to the time just preceding Dürer's death. We will take the most important. For instance, he says that Agnes "tormented him to such a degree as to shorten his life, for he was withered like a bundle of dry straw; he dared not seek any amusement away from home, or go into society." By "society" Pirkheimer meant himself more especially; and yet we know from Melanchthon that, until 1526, Dürer regularly took part in the councillor's banquets. If afterwards, when he became ill, his wife really did hinder him from going, she only fulfilled her duty. But Pirkheimer says she did it only from avarice and covetousness: "Moreover, she drove him day and night to his work that he might earn money to leave to her when he died. For she always pretended she should be reduced to starvation,

and does so still, although Albert has left her 6000 florins." Pirkheimer seems to take no account here of the portion of the inheritance paid to Dürer's brothers, though he must have known that by this action Agnes had displayed very different qualities to those which he attributed to her; and against this authentic and well-accredited fact, he can bring no counter-evidence based on personal observation, as he confesses farther on that "he never saw her after Dürer's death."

Moreover, our knowledge of Dürer's occupations during the last years of his life agrees little with Pirkheimer's statements. We shall see that Dürer's energies had for a long time been devoted, not so much to earning money as to the public good, to his own desire of glory, and to his literary studies, concerning the lucrativeness of which his wife could not possibly give way to any delusions. When Pirkheimer, still speaking of that time, says that "he had often himself remonstrated with her for her jealous and reprehensible behaviour, and foretold what the end would be, but got no thanks for his warnings," he merely reveals the fact of a long-standing hatred between the wife and the friend, ready to burst forth at the slightest provocation, and from which Dürer must of course also have suffered. And he adds as his reason, what sounds very like a paradox, "That she was hostile to every one who liked her husband or associated with him, which indeed distressed Albert most deeply, and brought him to his grave." The contrast between the strict and perhaps rather narrow-minded burgher's wife and the patrician man of the world is quite sufficient to account for their disputes. As to the reproaches concerning the injury done to Dürer's health, they may have been quite reciprocal. Who indeed knows whether Dürer's wife had not on those very grounds reason to regard her sickly husband's grand friend, who never could get on

without him, with dislike. She could hardly, however, have returned the compliment he was obliged, in spite of his hatred and aversion, to pay her, when he says: "She and her sister are not vicious, but, as I do not doubt, pious and thoroughly God-fearing women."

Pirkheimer's malevolent testimony as to the character of Dürer's wife is very much weakened by the rest of the letter to Tscherte, which shows him to have been at variance, not only with himself, but with the whole world. He speaks of everything, excepting the antlers, with dissatisfaction and petty irritation. After blaming the cruelty of the Turks, he goes on to find fault with the quarrelling Christians and their princes and rulers, "of whom, however, it is no good saying anything." Then again the Protestant lansquenets are severely censured for the way in which they had conducted themselves in the previous year, when Vienna was besieged by the Turks; and his bitterness is finally directed wholesale against the adherents of the new doctrines, without, however, by any means sparing the guardians of the old: "the state of things, it is easy to see, has grown so much worse that the Protestant rogues make the other rogues appear pious." He does not say this to please Tscherte; on the contrary, he gives him credit for holding more liberal views than himself with regard to church questions, and expects to excite his surprise by these statements, which is also the reason why he so repeatedly insists on their being true. The times and the state of things generally are painted as black as black can be; there is not one bright spot left. With fearful glances at the communistic tendencies of the time, he specially deplores the condition of things in Nuremberg, and the attitude of its council: "about which a great deal might be said." He protests, however, at the end against being accused of viewing matters from the traditional standpoint of pope and em-

peror. He quite sees the need for religious reform, but looks for it least of all from the sectarians: "God preserve every pious country and people from such teaching; for wherever it finds its way, there can be neither peace, quietness, nor unity."

These are the utterances of the man who justly ranks among the most active forerunners of the Reformation, who ten years before was included with Lazarus Spengler in the bull of excommunication issued against Luther. Now, on the brink of the grave, he repudiates not only his whole former course of action, but also the friend and fellow-sufferer of those days. For it is no other than Spengler, the secretary of the council, who shares with Dürer's widow the fate of being reviled in the letter to Tscherte. Pirkheimer writes of him: "I should like you to know what intrigues that man carries on; you would never cease wondering how in the same person words and deeds could so contradict each other. For at the same time that he writes and publishes one thing in his pamphlets, he acts differently, as will be found out one day. He was once a very good friend of mine, and of Albert, who is gone, and has also been my benefactor; but we both learned to know him to our own disadvantage, and had nothing more to do with him." *

How far Pirkheimer was justified in speaking here in Dürer's name, and ascribing to the dead his own rancorous feelings against their once common "friend and brother," † is difficult to prove. If, however, the greatest caution is necessary before we adopt the general opinions expressed in this letter, there is even more need to be careful when it is a question of the people who have directly provoked the ill-humour of the writer. How strongly he was possessed with hatred

* Campe, *Reliquien*, p. 169. Herr Lochner has abundantly proved to me in a letter that these words in no way had reference to Osiander, as Murr and Campe thought, but only to Spengler.

† *Dürers Briefe*, p. 174.

against Spengler and Dürer's wife is betrayed by a very trifling circumstance. In the margin of the rough draught of the letter we find in two places notes which appear to be mere trials of the pen, but in which we can plainly read the name "Spengler" twice over, and another time "uxor" (wife), with underneath the word "Henker" (wretch); a further proof that Pirkheimer, in the passage first quoted, was thinking only of Spengler.

Imagine for a moment, if we had no other sources of information but Pirkheimer's statements by which to judge of all the events and situations touched upon in this letter, that, in fact, we had only this document to refer to, what sort of an idea should we form of the times of the Reformation and of the historical position of Lazarus Spengler and of Pirkheimer? But as we find it quite natural to correct this one-sided and spiteful treatment of things and persons by means of other historical sources, we must make no exception in the case of the attacks upon Dürer's wife. Even apart from the acknowledged reasons for strong prejudice against her on the part of the writer, we are not justified in picking out one fact from amongst a whole chain of notoriously perverse and false statements and taking it for gospel. Still less have we a right to infuse a retrospective force into evidence of so suspicious a nature for the purpose of interpreting other quite indifferent matters. And yet this is what has been done when the assertions which Pirkheimer made respecting the latter end of Dürer's life have been applied to the whole course of it, and when Dürer's own words have been misused to prove such idle fabrications.

Under these circumstances it is necessary to well establish the fact that the highly coloured tale about Dürer's Xantippe is not founded upon any authentic popular tradition, but is simply a literary fable which only gained

circulation through literary channels in after centuries. The letter to Tscherte is its only source, and all later statements of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are derived from that source, such of them at least as are not manifest inventions. Pirkheimer's own original draught and an almost equally old copy of the letter were in the possession of private individuals in Nuremberg, where the utmost interest was taken in relation to Dürer, and where the documents could easily be examined. The fragment about Dürer's wife was first published by Joachim von Sandrart,* with the title, "Extract of a Letter from Herr Georg Hartmann to Herr Büchler," and beginning, "I have received the letter you sent me, in which you not only think kindly of me," &c.; while in Pirkheimer's letter to Tscherte the first sentence runs, "Our good friend Herr Jörg Hartmann has shown me a letter of yours to him, in which you not only," &c. Otherwise the two letters entirely agree, with the exception of some faults in copying. Whether it was by mistake or designedly that Sandrart transferred the name of the Nuremberg mathematician, Georg Hartmann, from the introduction to the title of the letter, and thus made him the author of it, is a matter of indifference to us; anyhow, the result was a startling confirmation of the romance which he had previously concocted for his readers. Sandrart was acquainted with the fact of Dürer's journey to the Netherlands, both from drawings of his which he had seen in the emperor's art cabinet, and also from the journal, of which he had an indirect knowledge. With these foundations to go upon, he gave full play to his fancy. We are confidently informed that Dürer undertook the journey to the Netherlands secretly, and on the advice of his friends, of Pirkheimer more especially, for the sole pur-

* *Teutsche Akademie*, 1675, i. p. 229.

pose of escaping from his scolding, disagreeable wife, putting her in a wholesome state of alarm, and curing her of her virulence. In her despair, she overwhelms Pirkheimer with entreaties and promises; and he, after administering a severe reproof to her, brings about Dürer's return. Still, the wife does not depart from her evil ways, and causes the premature death of her good husband. The whole story is made up out of that fragment of a letter, the actual terms of which are here and there made use of.

The discovery of the journal of the tour in the Netherlands, which showed that Dürer's wife went with him, and that he was on the best terms with her, divested the fable of all foundation. But Sandrart's romance had been too eagerly accepted for it to be readily cast aside; and attempts were made to fix it upon the Venetian journey of 1506, which Dürer really did undertake alone. His letters to Pirkheimer were diligently searched for passages which might be construed into accusations against his wife. However, the desired end could hardly have been attained but for the confounding Dürer's wife (*Dürerin*) with another person, whose name, "*Rechenmeisterin*" (account-keeperess), answered so well for a scornful designation of an avaricious woman.

In the letters from Venice, Dürer constantly teases his friend with rather coarse jokes about women or girls, for whom the self-satisfied, lusty young widower may have had an eye, or with whom he may have been intimate. He mentions these sometimes by their full name, sometimes by an abbreviation; occasionally he designates them by sketches of objects significant of their names; as, for instance, for *Rosentalerin* a rose, and for *Gärtnerin* a switch (*Gerte*).* His chief jokes, however, are about a lady whom he sometimes calls "our," sometimes "your Rechen-

* See p. 166.

meisterin," with the addition of a caricature.* As Rechenmeister,† as well as Rosentaler and Gärtner, are all family names which occur in Nuremberg at that time, there is no mystery about the matter. This is evident too from the way in which the abbreviations used to designate these ladies appear one after the other: "*die Rech. die Ros. die Gart.*" &c. ‡ Thus there can be no question of assuming the Rechenmeisterin and the caricature of her to be Dürer's wife.

Meanwhile, we must not take Dürer's broad jokes about the other women too literally. The tone of the age, the coarseness then habitual among men, and the facetious good spirits of the writer are enough to account for them. The names referred to probably belonged to perfectly blameless persons.§ At any rate, we could not suppose otherwise, for instance, of the Rosentalerin, for the Rosentalers were a much respected family in Nuremberg; though not eligible for the council, they held public offices and married amongst patrician families, until in the Thirty Years' War they died out in the person of Hasdrubal, the son of Hannibal.‖ The young girl courted by Pirkheimer must have been a member of this family; and, indeed, Dürer at that time attributed matrimonial intentions to his friend.¶ There still exists a mother-of-pearl medallion, apparently belonging to this girl's jewel casket, which has on this account, besides its artistic value, some historical

* See p. 166.

† With regard to this family, which was also and originally named Nessinger, see Lochner's *Nürnberger Chronik*, of which the MS. is in the town archives of Nuremberg. Compare, too, Tucher's *Baumeisterbuch*, in the *Bibl. des liter. Vereins*, 1862, vol. lxiv. p. 151, 2; 264, 25.

‡ *Dürers Briefe*, p. 20, l. 15, and p. 195.

§ This is confirmed by a sentence in Dürer's letters (*Dürers Briefe*, p. 21, l. 10), from which it appears that Pirkheimer did not spare even Dürer's wife in his nasty jokes. The strong terms in which Dürer replies to a playfully meant threat shows his honourable feeling, but proves nothing against his wife, who could not, at any rate at that time, have seemed so odious to Pirkheimer.

‖ Communicated by Herr Lochner.

¶ *Dürers Briefe*, p. 10, l. 3.

interest. It bears on the principal side the figure of a woman in the costume of the period, stretching out her arms to a child who runs towards her. Above is a scroll, with the words in Gothic letters: "Mutterlin las mich dir befolhen sin."* On the reverse, by the side of a shield with a lily, is the inscription: "*Agnes Rosentalerin. Ein gar hulfreich' Schutz in jedweder Betrubniss. Der ehr- und tugendbar Jungfraw.*"† Above this, strangely enough, is the date 1506.‡

All this ought to make us use with extreme caution the slight information we possess respecting the women who were connected with Pirkheimer and Dürer. In no country is the distinction between the sexes so strongly marked as in Germany. The German wife does not accompany her husband into the bustle of business; she concentrates all her energies upon domestic matters. Her value lies in homely, quiet work. Any deviation from this would easily arouse calumny, even though she were only forced into publicity through the fame of her husband. Such a fate befell the memory of Dürer's wife; and the imaginary portrait drawn of her has been the means of introducing into Dürer's biography an ugly trait, to which too much importance has been assigned, and which has been supposed, though without any reason, to have exercised an influence over his works.

We know now the real origin of this tradition, and the troubled source from which it took its rise. Dürer himself has never uttered a single word of complaint against his

* "Dear mother, take care of me."

† "Agnes Rosentalerin. May this be a talisman in all troubles. To the honourable and virtuous maiden."

‡ The arms on this medallion may have been symbolical, or they may have had to do with its donor. They are not the arms of the Rosentalers, which were on a field sable a bar argent, three roses gules; below, a mullet or. This relic, for the discovery of which I have to thank my friend, Herr Fr. Lippmann, is, including the old silver mounting, 2·3 inches in diameter.

wife, or expressed the smallest dissatisfaction with her; nor, while he lived, did any of his friends. After his death, Agnes showed great respect to her husband's memory by disposing of a large portion of her property according to his intentions and in favour of his brothers. Pirkheimer's accusations, which chiefly pointed to her stinginess and avarice, were made in this very year, and are therefore directly opposed to these authentic contemporary facts. This circumstance, apart from any motives he may have had, is of itself sufficient to throw a grave doubt upon the truth of his unsupported assertion. We cannot, it is true, bring forward any express eulogy of Agnes to oppose to Pirkheimer's censures, unless it be the one already cited from Melanchthon, and that precisely refers to an act of unusual generosity.

Amidst this conflicting testimony, we shall do well to regard Dürer's married state not as exceptionally ill-assorted, but rather as of that ordinary, every-day nature which may be inferred from his writings and drawings. With the now untenable tradition of his poverty, the whole fable about his avaricious wife falls to the ground. We ought rather to do honour, at any rate by an eloquent silence, to the faithful companion of his life.



CHAPTER VII.

THE STUDIO; ASSISTANTS; COPYISTS.

"I have also suffered great loss . . . through assistants who rendered no accounts."—DÜRER.

DÜRER, on his return from his wanderings, immediately set up his studio in his father's house, and lived there during the next fifteen years with his young wife.* No special licence was required for the exercise of painting in Nuremberg,† which puts an end to Sandrart's fable about Dürer's master-piece.‡ Seeing that Dürer was all his life long possessed with a restless love of work, his creative ardour must have been especially active at the beginning of his artistic career. But it was not easy for him under existing circumstances to find the opportunity of displaying his talents on a large scale, and years of laborious struggle had to elapse before he met with universal recognition. Meanwhile, he had not only to support his small household, but to maintain his aged parents and his younger brothers and sisters. When at first he received a commission for any altar-piece, it was often under

* This we know from Dürer's account of his father's death, in the year 1502. See Chap. VI. p. 146.

† See Chap. II. p. 27.

‡ See Chap. VIII. p. 221.

conditions which scarcely permitted him to throw himself completely into the work, or to carry it out carefully single-handed. The time and the skill of exacting assistants had to be taken into account if the master wished to gain a respectable livelihood. And thus we see Dürer in his early large paintings imitating for the most part the hasty, mechanical manner in which Wolgemut and his contemporaries turned out their work. The clever drawings or rough sketches were entrusted to underlings (*Knechte*), without much regard for the result; and we must not lose sight of this in examining and judging the first religious paintings which came out of Dürer's studio, those of them at least which are known to exist.

Happily, we possess one altar-piece which seems to be entirely his own work, painted soon after his return home, and whilst he was still full of all the impressions and glowing recollections of his foreign travels. This large triptych, hitherto little noticed, we will call, after the place where it is now preserved, the Dresden altar-piece.*

It is painted in water-colour or distemper, on fine canvas, in the rapid style familiar not only to the German masters but also to Mantegna and the school of Verona. The central picture shows a half-length figure of the Virgin, with a thin, delicate face, in a blue mantle and white veil, turned towards the left, in adoration of the Infant Christ, who is slumbering before her on a cushion, whilst a little angel, seen from behind, fans him with a fly-flap. Close by, on the right, is a desk, with a German illuminated prayer-book. Over the head of the Virgin, two floating angels hold a princely crown of Gothic filigree work, set with pearls. The apartment, from the effect of the perspective, seems to rise towards the back, and in the middle distance two more boy angels are

* Royal Gallery, 2nd floor, No. 1726. It was brought to Dresden from the hapel of the castle of Wittenberg in 1687.

occupied in cleaning it, one sprinkling water, the other sweeping. Behind them, in an adjoining room, St. Joseph is visible at work. The fact of the two flying angels at the top of the picture having been half cut away shows that it was reduced on account of the edges being damaged, as was very likely to be the case owing to the want of durability in the process employed. Otherwise, the painting is careful, and has lasted well enough. The conception and the drawing show a strange mixture of Flemish severity and Italian freedom. The draperies are sharp and angular. The sleeping child is Italian in pose and expression, but its feet are turned upward in the Flemish style. The boy angels in the background, in their unrestrained and somewhat straggling attitudes, and their full, sharply outlined forms, show unmistakable proofs of the influence of Mantegna. Their active occupations, the view from the window to the right of a German farmyard with trees and a waggon, form the prelude to that pleasing, sacred home life of the Holy Family the representations of which procured an undying fame for the author of the "Life of the Virgin."

The two side-wings of this picture are even more remarkable. The left one shows the hermit St. Antony, reading out of a large book; a half-length, life-size figure, in a blue garment. The powerful, stern head of the aged man, with eyes downcast, and the strong bony hands are so wonderfully true to nature that the careful accessory work—the angel with the rose wreath, and the gentle-looking little monsters—is scarcely noticed. The naked half-length figure on the right wing, in a praying attitude and with an expression of pain, may be St. Sebastian.* Though there is something hard and rugged in the sharply defined anatomy, it is thoroughly and unreservedly true to nature. The hair

* Or the absence of arrows and the partly cut apple might lead one to think it was Adam.

hangs in separate meshes, as in the ordinary *coiffure* of the Venetian women. But there can be no doubt that the model was German, and it is probably the first life-size figure painted from nature on this side of the Alps since van Eyck. This wing is especially well preserved; and the accessory work—the glass of water with wild flowers, the piece of bread, and the half-apple—is painted with wonderful care. The master's hand is most distinctly recognisable in the floating angels, whose heads, though somewhat wanting in animation, exactly correspond to Dürer's later type of children; for example, the little one to the right, above St. Sebastian's shoulder, and the face of the laughing angel with the coral necklace to the left.

The Dresden altar-piece was originally in the Church of All Saints at Wittenberg, which affords a further proof of its authenticity; for, as early as 1506, Scheurl mentions that there were three altar-pieces of Dürer's in that church, near the pulpit.* As to two of these works there can be no doubt, but with regard to the third, some consideration ought perhaps to be given to another, less authenticated statement, according to which there were amongst Dürer's paintings at Wittenberg "a Virgin with several angels," and a "St. Joseph."† Whether the Dresden altar-piece was painted to order for the elector Frederick the Wise of Saxony, or whether he acquired it later, cannot be definitely ascertained. Both cases are possible, as Frederick was often in Nuremberg between October 1494 and June 1501.‡ The first is the most probable supposition, now that we can trace the existence of relations between Dürer and his

* Chr. Scheurl, *Libellus de laud. Germ.*: "Decorant etiam sacellum omnium Sanctorum Vitembergae (prope ambonem) tres huius tabulae: cum illis tribus operibus, quae Apelles se fecisse putabat, certantes."

† Heller, *Dürer*, ii. p. 264.

‡ H. Deichsler's annals, in the *Chroniken der fränkischen Städte*, v. pp. 577, 586, 587, 616, 622, 624, 630, 639.

patron, the elector, back to the beginning of the sixteenth century. Its correctness, too, is confirmed by the St. Veit altar-piece, which was evidently painted for the elector a few years later, as it has the electoral arms of Saxony upon the side-wings. This large work was until recently in the private chapel of the archbishop's palace at Vienna, whence it was transferred to his neighbouring summer residence at Ober-St.-Veit. It, too, most probably originally came from Wittenberg. Age and, still more, modern restorations have much injured it; but there are no signs of the grand conception and exquisite finish of the Dresden altar-piece. It is a school painting of the ordinary type, already described. The principal picture is an exceedingly animated representation of the Crucifixion, with about sixty figures, among which are a dozen mounted soldiers; in the background appear Jerusalem and the sea-coast. The original sketch for this picture, now in the museum at Basle, is carefully outlined with the pen on grey paper, and heightened with white with the brush. In the middle, at the bottom, is written, in Dürer's hand: "*Albertus Dürer* 1502." The wings have been separated. On the inner side of the left one is Christ led to Calvary, and of the right, Jesus taken for the gardener by Mary Magdalen; on the outer sides are life-size figures of St. Sebastian and St. Roch, each with a coat-of-arms at his feet, one bearing crossed swords, the other a wreath of rue. The drawings for these wings are in the Städel Institute at Frankfurt.*

Compared with the Dresden altar-piece, that of St. Veit shows a distinct falling off both in conception and execution, and is an instance of how Dürer, under the pressure of outward circumstances, departed from the grand simplicity of

* This subject is treated at greater length in my article, *Das Dürer'sche Altarwerk zu Ober-St.-Veit bei Wien*, in the *Mittheilungen der k. k. Central-Commission*, Vienna, 1871, xvi. pp. 81 et seqq.

his early years. All the wealth of his composition is lavished on a multiplicity of figures and details, and it was long before his judgment regained its balance. But little progress, too, towards correct linear perspective is shown in the steep and towering heights of Calvary. And of the colouring, which is in oil and distemper, not much is by Dürer's hand, as can be seen at once by comparing the picture with the preliminary drawings for it. In this Dürer only followed the common practice of his contemporaries throughout Upper Germany, where much less was demanded in an altar-piece than was the case in the Netherlands and in Italy. Dürer himself, indeed, in writing to Jacob Heller, on the 4th November 1508, after speaking of the labour which had been expended on his altar-piece, says, "It is quite unheard of to put so much work into an altar-piece; who would see it?"*

The master contented himself with making a very careful sketch, which he then transferred with a brush on to the prepared panel, in dark lines, still visible in many instances where the colour is thin or damaged; the remainder was done by one or more of his pupils, or assistants. The lion's share of the painting of the St. Veit altar-piece belongs, without doubt, to young Hans Schäufelein, of Nördlingen. His style may be recognised in several of the men's heads, which are idealised in accordance with some fixed aim. The faces are long and regular, with overhanging brows, prominent noses, and deep lines about the mouth, which give an ironical cast to the otherwise noble features. The life-size St. Sebastian, on the left wing, is evidently wholly Dürer's. The naked body is wonderfully modelled by means of grey, well-blended shadows; the longish head, with fair, waving hair, has a sharply defined profile, turned

* *Dürers Briefe*, 29, 12.

to the right, the eye looking out sideways. The drawing of the broad chest, the pose of the head and legs, and, indeed, the whole anatomy of the figure, strongly recall the Adam in the engraving of 1504. Unlike the Sebastian of the Dresden altar-piece, it is already based on Dürer's theoretical studies of proportion.

Hans Leonhard Schäufelein must have been older than is usually supposed, since in 1507 he was a sufficiently finished artist to be able to publish the great series of woodcuts which adorn Dr. Pinder's *Speculum Passionis*. His father Franz migrated, in 1476, from Nördlingen to Nuremberg, and Hans was probably born about that time.* In Nuremberg he probably went through Wolgemut's school, and then worked with Dürer until the latter, on his departure for Venice, in 1505, broke up his studio. From that time Schäufelein appears as a painter on his own account. He married Afra Tucher, of a patrician family in Nuremberg, returned to Nördlingen in 1515, and died in 1540. He was the first to adopt Dürer's manner. Whether his contemporary, Albrecht Altdorffer (born about 1478, died 1538), studied in Nuremberg, or came in contact with Dürer, has not yet been ascertained. We only know that in 1505 he became a burgher of Ratisbon, and in the following year began his independent career as a painter. There was a drawing † belonging to Frauenholz in 1822, which, according to an old inscription on it, was given to Albrecht Altdorffer, at Ratisbon, by Dürer; but its authenticity appears to be very doubtful.

There are, however, two other eminent masters whom we may confidently assume to have held close personal

* Compare C. W. Neumann and the Count von Walderdorff, *Die drei Roritzer*, Ratisbon, 1872, pp. 27, 190.

† It represents the head, wrapped in a cloth, of an old man asleep, "carefully done in red chalk," an unusual material for Dürer (Heller, *Dürer*, ii. p. 98).

relations with Dürer in the early days of his activity, namely, Hans von Kulmbach and Hans Baldung, surnamed Grien, and who came from Gmünd in Swabia. Not that they were Dürer's pupils; they were rather his contemporaries; and we know, through Neudörffer, that the first-named studied with Jakob Walch, *i.e.* Jacopo dei Barbari, and that the style of the latter was formed at home before he came under Dürer's influence. But, setting aside the individuality which is a characteristic of every great artist, we can trace in each of these such evidences of Dürer's influence as could only be explained by their having been temporarily employed in his first studio. Hans von Kulmbach, as we shall see, did some work afterwards for him; and Dürer must always have maintained friendly relations with the absent Baldung, for not only did the latter take some of his works, and also some of Schäufelein's, for sale, so to say, on commission to the Netherlands in 1520, but, when Dürer died, Baldung received a lock of hair taken from his corpse. This relic has been successively handed down, since Baldung's death at Strassburg, in 1545, until the present time.* Whether to these names may also be added that of the Zürich painter Hans Leu, to whom Dürer sent greetings in 1523, and who fell at the battle of Cappel, in 1531, is uncertain.†

With such general conclusions as these we must be content, in default of any written evidence to explain the connection between a group of painters whose close affinity has often led to mistakes as to the authorship of their works. Our only sources of information are a number of more or less finished school pictures, each showing the varied peculiarities of different scholars. They are the products of a studio in full work, and which, though it had not yet

* It is now in the library of the Kunstakademie in Vienna. See Heller, *Dürer*, ii. p. 272, and Thausing, *Zeitschrift für bild. Kunst*, 1874, ix. p. 322.

† *Dürers Briefe*, p. 50, l. 9, and p. 201.

acquired fame, we are constantly coming across in various minute ways. Men were educated in it who, though they cannot, taken separately, be properly considered as Dürer's pupils, may, taken *en masse*, be figuratively classed under the name of the early Dürer school. This was more particularly the case with painters and designers for woodcuts, as distinguished from that later school of Dürer's which was much less closely connected with him, and chiefly occupied itself with engraving on copper. After the breaking up of his first studio, Dürer does not appear to have established another on so large a scale. The more ambitious he became of painting larger works entirely with his own hand, the more he abandoned the business-like fabrication of votive pictures, until he at last grew tired of painting altogether.

Dürer's later pictures, by his own hand alone, always bear a clear, distinct signature; but these earlier school pictures are either not signed at all or else so inaccurately that it becomes very difficult to arrange them chronologically, more especially as they are so unequal in merit. We must be content to place them in the period between the production of the Dresden altar-piece and that of St. Veit. To this period would also belong the Descent from the Cross which Dürer is said to have painted for his friend, the goldsmith Hans Glim, and which the latter caused to be hung in the Predigerkirche "on the column on the right next to the pulpit."* His son sold this picture to Hans Ebner, who died in 1553; and it afterwards came into the possession of Sebastian and Wilibald Imhoff, the latter of whom valued at 80 florins this "large picture in oil."

It is possible that this votive picture, of which all trace has since been lost, is identical with the one of the same subject in the Munich Pinakothek.† Nicodemus, to the left,

* Neudörffer, *Nachrichten*, p. 30.

† Large Rooms, No. 94.

is supporting the body under the arms, in order to lay it down on the ground. The standing figure of St. John behind the group of mourning women in the centre gives to this part of the composition a pyramidal form. Joseph of Arimathea stands on the right with the box of ointment. A landscape forms the background, with, in the distance, Jerusalem, the buildings of which are carefully treated; high blue-green mountains shut in the horizon to the right, and stretch away, lit up by the evening sun, towards the shores of a lake on the left. The foliage is entirely in Dürer's manner. The corpse in the foreground, with its sombre colouring and the swollen scars of the wounds, produces a feeling of awe. The composition is well thought out, and there is much truth and variety in the expressions of grief given to the different figures. But they are too crowded together. Linear and aërial perspective are both imperfect; and the colours glare and dance before the eyes. All this takes away from the effect of the execution, which in many places is very careful. The colour is boldly laid on upon the thick priming of the panel. The date 1500 and the monogram very slightly outlined with an almost dry brush on the corner of the winding sheet may be authentic, but the painting does not seem to be the work of one hand. It would be difficult to distinguish between, and to point out with certainty, those who assisted; but in some parts, as, for instance, the figure of Nicodemus, we seem distinctly to trace Kulmbach,* whilst others recall Baldung Grien.†

* Compare it, for instance, with the saints' figures by this master in the first room.

† He probably painted the charming little head of a young woman on the right, which now that the brown of one of Nicodemus's leather boots which had been painted over it has disappeared, is again visible. The head is no doubt that of the donor, who originally appeared in the picture in the usual kneeling attitude. It bears a great resemblance to three small heads of women in a

The Holzschuher picture in the Moritzkapelle at Nuremberg is very similar in composition, but there the corpse is turned the other way, and is supported on the right by St. John; a holy woman with a box of ointment replaces the figure of St. John in the other picture, and the grouping is freer. The Magdalen, on the left, at the feet of the Saviour, expresses her grief with outstretched arms in the same manner as one of the women in the Munich picture—a bold conception, which Dürer has often repeated, and which may be traced back to a similar figure by Mantegna. In other respects, there is great dignity in the expression of the heads, and the arrangement of the drapery is in some parts excellent. The corpse is not so dark and ghastly as in the Munich picture. But we can scarcely judge of the colouring as a whole, the picture being greatly damaged, and the chief group much painted over. Here and there, as on the knee of the Saviour, the dark lines of the preparatory design are visible underneath the colours. As, too, is often the case with pictures of the Upper German school, the dark outlines of the other figures and heads, even those of the little kneeling donors, are very clearly defined. The landscape is far more carefully done than in the Munich picture. A river stretches away in the distance, spanned by towers and arches of a reddish hue; beyond rise in luminous masses the buildings of Jerusalem, while to the right is a steep dark precipice, and to the left Mount Calvary, seen in the full light. It is easy to see that the arms of the Holzschuher family, close to the figures of the donors, have been scratched out and replaced by imaginary ones. The picture passed out of the possession of the Peller family into the Boisserée collection, and was afterwards

drawing in the Albertina, which, though it formed part of Dürer's effects, is certainly by Baldung Grien, and not by Dürer. (*Jahrb. für Kunstw.* ii. p. 215.)

purchased by King Ludwig I., in order to restore it to Nuremberg. In its former place on a pillar in the Church of St. Sebald hangs an old Nuremberg copy of it, with the same peculiar watery green tone.

By far the most important work which issued from Dürer's first studio, and the one in which he himself took the greatest share, is the Paumgärtner altar-piece from the Church of St. Catherine in Nuremberg, purchased in 1612 by Duke Maximilian I.,* and now in the Pinakothek at Munich. The middle compartment represents the Nativity. The Virgin, fair, and clad entirely in blue, kneels under a wooden shed near some ruins, and gazes with motherly anxiety and rapture on the Infant Christ, who is surrounded by five little angels with short tunics and bright-coloured wings. Joseph, wrapped in a red robe, appears on the other side with a lantern. In the background there is a cheerful landscape, in which are seen the shepherds receiving the glad tidings; two of them are already entering the building. On the wooden post in the middle is Dürer's monogram, very indistinctly drawn. Each of the two side wings has the figure of a knight standing by his charger in full armour, with red, black-edged gorget and red leggings. They are probably faithful portraits of the donors. The one to the left is said to be Dürer's friend, Stephan Paumgärtner; the other his brother Lucas. "This is the armour now worn in Germany," writes Dürer in 1498, on a similar water-colour drawing of a knight in the Albertina. It was also, we may add, the red uniform worn by the Nuremberg levies under Pirkheimer in the Swiss war of 1499. Whether the two eminently characteristic and uncon-

* Baader, *Beiträge*, i. p. 12. In Nuremberg, at that time, this painting was condemned as a bad work, and considered not to be Dürer's. A copy was made for St. Catherine's Church. A large coloured pen drawing for the centre panel is in the British Museum.

cerned-looking knights are intended to represent St. George and St. Eustace, there is nothing to prove. The wings have both been made wider. Of the representations of St. Barbara and St. Catherine, on their outer sides, no trace remains.*

Though the Paumgärtner altar-piece far surpasses the older paintings already named in delicacy of finish and in originality of conception, it can only be looked upon as the best of Dürer's studio pictures. The Virgin, it is true, is entirely his type, and even the contracted eyes of the angels do not belie his early style, while the large figures in the side-wings are valuable specimens of his original and ever powerful and effective realism. Still the picture is wanting in that uniform animation of all the parts, and in that energy, which only the hand of a master can give; and, what is more, the dark outlines of the design are plainly visible. As to the date, it cannot be much later than 1500, as is proved by the meagreness of the composition, the imperfect linear perspective, and other analogous points both in style and technique. The Paumgärtner altar-piece may be said to close the series of Dürer's school pictures, and to act at the same time as a link between them and those more important paintings, too few in number, which the master completed single-handed after 1504.

It is true that he still continued to receive orders for altar-pieces of the same kind. This is proved by two sketches in the Albertina, one of them dated 1508. The centre contains an Adoration of the Infant Christ like that in the Paumgärtner altar; but there is greater unity in the composition, and the artist has introduced St. Catherine kneeling, and St. Barbara standing. The side wings on which are represented the two St. Johns, are only faintly outlined in bistre; but the middle is charmingly coloured, the lights

* Murr, *Journal*, xiv. p. 99. Heller, *Dürer*, ii. p. 194. Baader, *Beiträge*, i. p. 12.

being left blank, and the whole vigorously retouched with the pen and Indian ink. This drawing affords, on a small scale, an example of the mode of procedure employed in the school pictures. The same may be said of another sketch for a triptych, the centre of which represents the Virgin with St. Jerome and St. Antony, and the side wings St. Sebastian and St. Roch, in outline. It is not known whether these sketches were ever worked out into pictures. Another slight pen sketch in the Albertina dated 1511, shows the Virgin enthroned with an angel at her feet playing on a violin, and two others crowning her; above them, a high-arched portico, in which are ranged in perspective the same saints that figure in the drawing mentioned at the beginning of this paragraph. This composition has some resemblance to the middle compartment of the beautiful Tucher altar-piece in St. Sebald's Church in Nuremberg, which was finished by Hans von Kulmbach in 1513, and is always considered as one of his best works; a significant fact when taken in connection with the tradition that the Tucher picture was painted from a drawing of Dürer's, at one time in the possession of Sandrart, and now preserved in the Print Room of the Berlin Museum. It is signed with Dürer's monogram, and dated 1511.*

Whatever may have been the origin of the Tucher altar-piece, there is nothing remarkable in the fact of Dürer providing his friend Kulmbach with a sketch for it. Another great work of Kulmbach's, dated 1511, representing the Adoration of the Magi, now in the Berlin Museum,† has so much in it of Dürer that its composition might in the same way be attributed to him. And so with another altar-piece, the well-known fragments of which have univer-

* Compare Thausing, *Die Laurea*, &c., *Jahrb. für Kunstw.* ii. p. 179.

† No. 596 A.

sally been attributed to Dürer, viz. the Jabach altar-piece, so named from its former owner in Cologne. Nothing is known of the centre-piece, but it was probably a sculpture in wood. On the inner side of the wings, on a gold ground, in couples, are St. Simon with St. Lazarus and St. Joachim with St. Joseph; they passed from the Boisserée collection into the Pinakothek at Munich.* The outer side of the left wing exhibits Job mocked by his wife, who is throwing water over him, and that of the right wing, two of his friends playing derisively on a drum and a clarionet; the former is in the Städel Institute at Frankfurt, the latter in the museum at Cologne. The Berlin Museum possesses a coloured drawing of later date, in which these two subjects are reproduced, with the addition of a predella, by a master of the Cranach school, representing Job at table with several women. Whether Dürer merely furnished the designs for the wings of the Jabach altar remains doubtful; but they certainly bear a likeness, though only a general one, to his school. The Dürer monograms on the bishop's crozier of St. Lazarus and on St. Joseph's staff, the latter with the date 1523, are not genuine. The figures are chiefly noticeable for their affected pose, haughty, prominent features, and cramped draperies. The clear, liquid colouring reminds us most of Kulmbach; but the date referred to above is quite opposed to any such idea, for, already on the 3rd of December 1522, Heinrich Pauer, as trustee of Hans von Kulmbach's estate, acknowledges the receipt of some arrears due upon one of his paintings.† Kulmbach, whose family name was Fuess, and not Wagner, as was for a long time supposed,

* Cabinets, Nos. 123 and 127.

† Nuremberg town archives, cons. 30, fol. 506. Neudörfer's *Nachrichten*, published at Vienna, in 1875, in the *Quellenschriften für Kunstgeschichte*, vol. x. p. 135. In 1525 a burgher from Joachimsthal, in Bohemia, made a claim on Kulmbach's estate (*Jahrb. für Kunstw.* i. p. 224).

must therefore have died twenty years earlier than is usually admitted. At the same time, there are two wings of an altar-piece in the Church of St. Lawrence at Nuremberg, with standing figures of saints, distinctly analogous to the above; and one of them, that with St. Gabinus and St. Sigismund, bears Kulmbach's monogram, and the same date, 1523. Whether Kulmbach's studio was carried on after his death, and whether young Barthel Beham, of whose style some of these school pictures remind us, worked there, is a question difficult to answer.

Whatever may have been Dürer's share in the altar-pieces already mentioned, it gives no promise of the coming power and individuality of the author of the Apocalypse. Indeed, we should have had hardly any materials for judging of Dürer's method of painting at that time but for some of the early portraits by his hand which have come down to us. Dürer himself, following the practice still common in 1513, thus defines the mission of painting as limited to two objects. "The art of painting," he says, "is employed in the service of the church to set forth the sufferings of Christ, and many other similar subjects; it also preserves the features of men after their death."* And so Dürer as a young man, in default of other commissions, employed his brush in preserving likenesses of his belongings, and repeatedly painted his own portrait.

In 1497 he adopted his well-known monogram, and in the following year finished and published his Apocalypse. It was probably therefore a natural feeling of pride and satis-

* Zahn, *Dürerhandschriften des Britischen Museums*, in the *Jahrb. für Kunstw.* i. 5.

faction that led him in 1498 to paint a most carefully executed portrait of himself dressed in the fashion of the day. His costume is even more gay and elegant than that he wore as a bridegroom five years before. The widely opened doublet and the cap hanging on one side are striped white and black. The shirt is of fine linen hemmed with gold thread, leaving the throat bare; and a black and white ribbon crosses his breast and holds up a violet mantle on the left shoulder. The fashionable tight-fitting vest adds probably to the stiffness of the attitude; the right elbow and the grey-gloved hands rest on the parapet, which runs along the bottom of the picture. Through a window in the wall in the background, can be seen a gleaming landscape with a village on the banks of a river, and beyond bright-coloured hills, and snow-capped peaks. Against this the narrow head with slight beard and long, thin locks looks almost pale in colouring and weak in tone, though very carefully finished. It is turned to the right, but the eyes look straight at the spectator from the corners of their sharply defined sockets with the same fixedness with which the master must have contemplated his reflection in the glass. The explanation of the pleasure taken by the artist in his own appearance is to be found in the increased self-consciousness of the age; while the ingenuous sincerity of the whole portrait lends it a peculiar charm.

What is chiefly to be remarked in the painting of this picture is that Dürer has slightly touched the gloves, neck, and cloak, with his fingers and the palm of his hand, so as to remove the smoothness of the surface and give it a sort of grain. The original is now in the Madrid Museum; and a copy, dry, cold, and green in tone, exists in the Uffizii at Florence. Wenzel Hollar made an etching from a copy which was in Lord Arundel's collection in 1645. Dürer's own portrait of himself at twenty-six, painted in water-colours on canvas,

originally in the Imhoff collection,* and afterwards sold to Amsterdam in 1633, in "a somewhat damaged condition," must since have entirely disappeared. It was probably, however, nothing but a pasticcio of the Madrid picture, done at Nuremberg.

This seems a good opportunity of making a few remarks upon the inventories of the Imhoff collection which are so often referred to. As sources of information for the history of Dürer's works, they have been much over-estimated in modern times, and it is necessary now in the face of certain well-ascertained facts to be very cautious in using them. Though there is nothing to show that Wilibald Imhoff the Elder, who died in 1580, the grandson of Pirkheimer, and the brother of Dürer's godchild Hieronymus, inherited from his grandfather any works of Dürer's, he collected a considerable number of his drawings, and also some paintings. In this he may have been more assisted by fortunate opportunities, and by his zeal and love for the cause, than by any special judgment or knowledge. And so, in spite of his good intentions, many spurious works must have crept in, the number of which would still more probably be increased by his heirs and descendants, who learned to look upon their art-collections as a sort of goods depôt, and Dürer's works as marketable commodities. Whilst the genuine works found purchasers at once, the drawings, for instance, being bought by the emperor Rudolph II., who was an art connoisseur and an ardent admirer of Dürer's, the doubtful specimens remained on hand and multiplied.† Special facilities for the manufacture of spurious portraits were afforded by the collection of coins and medallions made by Wilibald Imhoff. Many of them are still to be found in the public collections of

* Eye, *Dürer*, Synoptical Tables I. No. 9.

† Compare the account of the Imhoff collection by Heller, ii. 71–86.

drawings at Berlin, Bamberg, and Weimar.* It is, however, immaterial for our purpose whether the Imhoffs and other Nuremberg merchants were the authors or the victims of these frauds. This only is certain, that by means of skilled hands duplicates were produced of many of the finest of Dürer's drawings in the Imhoff collection; and, further, that of nearly every one of Dürer's paintings existing in Nuremberg up to the close of the sixteenth century, and even later, two or more copies have come down to posterity. Among these Nuremberg copyists, not to say forgers, of Dürer's works may be specially mentioned Hans Hofmann (died about 1600), of whom Andreas Gulden, the author of a continuation of Neudörffer's work, says in 1600: "He copied Dürer so accurately that many of his works passed for originals by Dürer." Afterwards we have Georg Gärtner (died 1651), Bonnacker, Johann Christian Ruprecht, Johann and Georg Fischer, Jobst Harrich (died 1617), Paul Juvenel (died 1643), and others. This posthumous "school of Dürer" is unique in the history of art. No other master, not even Raphael, has been so steadily appropriated by fraudulent imitators as Dürer.

Hans Hieronymus, in his private journal (*Geheimbüchlein*), which has been preserved in the town library of Nuremberg, makes some compromising revelations as to the way in which the Imhoffs carried on their trade. For instance, amongst the works sold to a certain Matthaeus Overbeck, of Leyden, in 1634, are mentioned: "A Madonna . . . my ancestor, Hans Imhoff, had it painted at Anttorf (Antwerp); I have sold it to Overbeck for a Lucas van Leyden: *an sit dubitatur a multis!*

* For further details on this subject, see my memoir on Zahn, in the *Jahrbuch für Kunstw.* vi. 221. Also some just criticisms by Alfred Woltmann, in the *Literarisches Centralblatt*, 1875, col. 83, 84, and 188–190, on a rather superficial work, *Untersuchungen über A. Dürer*, by A. v. Sallet, Berlin, 1874.

—A small Madonna in oil colours, on panel; my father had Albert Dürer's signature put underneath it, but one could not positively affirm that Albert Dürer was the painter." There is plenty of foundation for doubting the authenticity of all the works ascribed to Dürer in the Imhoff collection, and more especially the paintings, for the elector Max of Bavaria, an enthusiastic admirer of Dürer's, was very little impressed with them. Hieronymus Imhoff himself says that when Dürer's works were sent to him at Munich, in 1630, "at his urgent request, he neither cared for them nor would admit many of them to be originals, but sent them all back without bidding anything for them."* The shrewd and critical elector, who had adorned his palace with Dürer's best pictures, knew well what he was about. He was wiser than the Amsterdam merchant, who three years later, through the medium of a certain Abraham Blomart, bought up the collection in Nuremberg for 34,000 thalers. The writer of the private journal had good reason for exclaiming: "Thank God this has been a much better bargain for us than we ever could have dared to imagine possible, for among all the pieces sold there was certainly not one of importance; they were chiefly small water-colour drawings, many of which it is very doubtful if Dürer ever touched."

The many proofs which establish the existence of this very fertile source of spurious Dürers ought to satisfy the objections of those who would find decisive evidence of authenticity in all works of art attributed to Dürer if they could be traced back to the Imhoff collection, or were executed in distemper, gum, or water-colour, on fine unprepared canvas. The purchase made for the Earl of Arundel at Nuremberg was not till 1636, subsequent to the decided

* With the exception of two trifling works.

refusal of the elector Maximilian.* Nor was the technical process of painting in water-colour on an unprepared canvas by any means peculiar to Dürer; it had been used in the Nuremberg school of the fifteenth century, and was also known to North Italian painters as a German method. It is a well authenticated fact that Duke Sigismund of Upper Bavaria sent in 1475 to the wife of the margrave Albrecht Achilles "a small canvas on which is a picture of the Virgin, painted by some very delicate process." †

One noticeable peculiarity of the Nuremberg counterfeits is, that they were said to be replicas by the master himself, and that consequently in addition to Dürer's monogram they bear in each instance a date different from that on the original. Sometimes indeed the copy was dated a year back, in order to make it appear superior to the genuine work. This perhaps explains the fact of there being in the Imhoff collection duplicates, dated 1492 and 1497, of Dürer's portraits of himself taken in 1493 and 1498. And in the same way the portraits of Dürer's parents, bought by Wilibald Imhoff from the wife of Andreas Dürer, the sister-in-law of the painter, seem to have been accepted afterwards as copies of the pictures in the town-hall.‡ As matters stand, it is, unfortunately, impossible to become acquainted with Dürer's own work without at the same time encountering

* This purchase included, besides the works of art, a rich collection of books. (Heller, *Dürer*, 73, 74.) No doubt the autograph MSS. of Dürer in the British Museum, and the precious volume of drawings with the inscription, "*Teckenings* 1637," which were bequeathed by Mr. Sloane, and had formerly belonged to the Arundel collection, formed a part of these two sales. The Imhoffs still continued to pick up things in Nuremberg after they had sold their first collection of drawings to the emperor Rudolph II., the greater part of which passed out of the imperial possession in 1796 into the Albertina. (See *La Collection Albertine à Vienne*, by M. Thausing, in the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* for July and August, 1870).

† Baader, *Jahrb. für Kunstw.* i. 268.

‡ v. Eye, *Leben A. Dürers*, Synoptical Table, No. 19.

specimens of the use to which his name was very soon put in his own country as a commercial speculation. Internal evidence alone can decide as to the authenticity of the pictures which bear his name. With Dürer, more than with all other painters, mere external proofs of origin count for very little. After carefully selecting the genuine pictures and rejecting all doubtful ones, enough of his work remains to give us an adequate idea of his painting.

These observations will help us at once in judging of those two pictures hitherto generally considered to be portraits of Katharina Fürleger. Dürer is said to have twice painted in 1497 a pretty girl of that name, at one time with flowing hair, at another with broad plaits. Both pictures were in the collection of Lord Arundel, when, as is well known, Hollar etched them. One is said to have found its way into the gallery of the Städel Institute at Frankfurt, the other into the collection of Baron Speck-Sternburg, at Lütschena, near Leipzig.

A glance is enough to show us that we have to do here with two totally different heads, and not with two portraits of the same person. Besides, are the pictures genuine? On this point it is to be noted that there still exist two examples of each of them—one pair in oil on panel, the other in water-colours on canvas. These latter, which formed pendants, and are said to have belonged to an archbishop of Olmütz, and to have been in a very bad condition, passed at his death into the hands of Herr Karl Waagen, at Munich, and were restored at Augsburg by Deschler. One of them was afterwards bought by the town of Frankfurt; the other, representing the girl with the plaited hair, by Mr. Wynn Ellis. It is of course open to any one to consider these pictures as much damaged originals, but at any rate there is none of Dürer's work still visible. As to the oil portrait at Lütschena, with its meagre limbs, faulty hands, and green, watery tints,

it is evidently a later and still more inferior copy. It may have been done after an original of Dürer's, with or without the Fürleger arms; but no such original has yet been found.

On the other hand, there still exists an undoubted original of the so-called Fürlegerin with the long hair. It is a half length on panel in the Royal Gallery at Augsburg, of a young girl praying, and bears the genuine monogram of the painter and the date 1497. Although strictly painted from life, it can hardly be called a portrait. Nor is it intended for a sacred subject. It has in fact more the character of an exquisitely finished study. The slender youthful form stands out bright and clear against a dark background. Her small round head is slightly inclined towards the left shoulder; while the long curved eyelids are cast down with an expression of deep reverence and calm submission. In the sharp outlines and the angularity of the forms, Mantegna's influence can still be recognised. Her lightly folded hands are delicately modelled, even to the dimples on the knuckles, White linen encircles her slender throat; and her tight-fitting dress is of a deep red colour, bordered with green. The cheeks and lips have a slight rosy tinge, but what seems to have chiefly attracted the eye of the master is the rich golden hair, which floats over her shoulders and down to her waist. This wealth of flowing tresses is rendered with a truth, a softness, and a glow of colour, quite unequalled. It seems as if one could grasp hold of the luxuriant mass. Each single hair seems distinct, and yet the execution is nowhere finikin, much less so in fact than in several later works, in which Dürer carried his skill in painting hair to a pitch of affectation, the mannerism of which his copyists and counterfeiters knew well how to imitate. Here its lifelike appearance is obtained much more by the colouring than by the details of the drawing. The thin white veil, transparent as air, which covers the head, and

falls down over the eyebrows, is almost imperceptible. So minute is the execution that on the clasp of the coral bracelet can be discerned a Crucifixion, with the Virgin and St. John on either side. The copy in the Städel Institute presents several points of difference. A rosary takes the place of the bracelet; the colours of the dress and its border are exchanged; the head is ornamented with a frontlet set with pearls; and above, on the left, are introduced the arms of the Fürleger. Whether these ever existed in the original picture is uncertain.*

The earliest portrait which Dürer seems to have painted on commission is that of Oswald Krell in 1499, now in the Pinakothek at Munich. It is by no means a prepossessing individual whose physiognomy is here represented in all its harshness. The young man's bony, beardless head is turned a little to the left; and he is looking gravely, almost sullenly, out of the corners of his eyes. The black velvet dress harmonises well with the red curtain in the background, which is drawn aside to the left, so as to give a glimpse of some lofty trees. Extreme care is again bestowed on the painting of the hair and of the furred cloak, which falls down from the right shoulder, and is held together by the left hand. The grey shadows in the flesh tints are delicately blended. In everything the plain unvarnished truth is combined with a gravity characteristic of the age. As a rule, Dürer's early pictures are distinguished by a colouring more deep and powerful, and by more of the feeling of a painter, the technique still recalling that of the old Flemish school introduced at Nuremberg by Wolgemut, though insensibly becoming influenced by the more abstract method and studied drawing of Mantegna and Schongauer.

* At any rate Eigner, who unfortunately restored the picture, did not discover them.

The portrait of the imperial councillor Sixtus Oelhafen (born 1466, died 1539), taken in 1503, should be mentioned here, though unfortunately only copies of it exist. One of these was in the Derschau collection, and another is in the library of the university at Würzburg. The small engraving by J. A. Böner was not done from the original.* There is the same difficulty too in identifying a portrait of Jacob Fugger, surnamed the Rich (1459–1525), which Dürer must have painted, though at a much later period. The almost life-size original drawing for it, which Herr B. Suermondt discovered at Amsterdam and purchased,† dates from the years 1518–1520, and corresponds with the picture ascribed to Kulmbach in the Berlin Museum,‡ and with another copy belonging to Count Törring at Munich. There is, however, in the Pinakothek at Munich,§ what appears to be a very slightly different portrait of the same person, which came from Schleissheim, and according to the inventory of 1760 was marked on the back as a work of Dürer's, of the year 1500. The picture is in distemper, and consequently has suffered much; the green background and the dress in particular having been completely painted over. No doubt the head, which is better preserved, by its excellent modelling and the cheerful, life-like expression of the features, recalls Dürer; and the pinched-up eyes and mouth indicate his early period. On the other hand, the person represented by no means looks twenty years younger than in the portraits mentioned above, but is much more of an old man, and from the falling in of the upper lip seems to have lost his teeth. This contradiction appears inexplicable, except on the assumption that the Munich picture is not Jacob Fugger, but some one very like him, perhaps a relation.

* The Derschau Catalogue, p. 6. Heller, 223, 265, 909.

† It now belongs to the author.

‡ No. 557. § Room I. No. 51.

There is still another painting in water-colours to be considered, also of the year 1500, which in many respects stands alone among Dürer's works. It represents Hercules battling with the Stymphalian birds, and is now in the Germanic Museum at Nuremberg. Waagen saw the picture in a damaged condition when it was still at Schleissheim, and pronounced that it would be very difficult, if not impossible, to restore it. It has since been daubed over with oil-colours and varnish, all except a few small portions, among which happily is the stone bearing the monogram and date. The naked Hercules, half life-size, strides away towards the left, in the act of drawing his tightly strained bow, and is consequently principally seen from behind, with his head and its flowing locks exactly in profile. The bird in the air on the left and its two companions are depicted as small flying dragons, with long-shaped women's heads and breasts, like Sirens; but they are not at all horrible. In the background there is a well-composed landscape with a river. As the picture itself is a complete ruin, we may congratulate ourselves that there is at any rate still in existence a sketch of Dürer's for it in the grand ducal collection at Darmstadt. It is a washed pen drawing, in which the principal figure stands more in the middle, and drags after him the lion's skin, which partly covers his back. The many considerable alterations in the figure show the pains Dürer took to master anatomy, and to express energetic movement by the position of the limbs, and the tension of the muscles. The landscape, on the other hand, which was easy to him, is only slightly indicated. Amongst all Dürer's known paintings, this is one of the only two in which he has depicted neither a sacred subject nor a portrait, and the only one for which mythology has furnished the theme. Who can have given him the order for it?

CHAPTER VIII.

THE RIVALRY WITH WOLGEMUT, AND THE EARLY ENGRAVINGS ON COPPER.

"For any one who wishes to become a great painter and skilful artist it is above all necessary to be continually copying works by good masters, until a complete freedom of hand is acquired."—DÜRER.

BURCKHARDT, on one occasion, draws attention to the fact that at the time of the Renaissance several of the greatest Italian masters executed their best works at an advanced age. Leonardo was more than fifty when he painted the Last Supper; Giovanni Bellini's noblest works date from his eightieth year; Titian and Michel Angelo were old men when they produced their masterpieces. It is as if that remarkable epoch had been in such haste that in its eagerness it had overwhelmed all, from the boy to the old man, with the fulness of its power. The engraving usually attributed to Agostino Veneziano, though by Vasari to Marcello Fogolino, depicting an old man in a child's cart, with the inscription below, "*Anchora imparo*"—"I still learn"—is admirably typical of it.

The German art of those days had also masters who to

the end of their days were ever learning. And it was precisely the teachers of the two greatest German painters who were the most remarkable for this quality. There can no longer be any doubt of the correctness of the tradition, till lately unquestioned, that it was not Hans Holbein the Younger, but his aged father and teacher, who painted the St. Sebastian altar-piece now in the Munich Pinakothek and the other pictures in the same style. Since it was necessary to admit the existence of a marvel, and to verify it historically, critical science has pronounced in favour, not of the precocious youth, but of the vigorous old man who, while his clear, refined intellect was investing the forms of the old style with an unwonted grace, and his hand was already master of a rich store of artistic experience, could still let his imagination carry him away into the newly-discovered wonderland of the Renaissance. As in the elder Holbein new and unsuspected powers developed themselves at an age when the faculties of ordinary mortals usually begin to decay, so Michel Wolgemut still advanced with unabated vigour after he had passed his seventieth year. He, too, derived fresh sources of inspiration from the ideas and forms of the antique.

Naturally, however, the effect produced upon the two masters, the one at Nuremberg, the other at Augsburg, was quite different. The ancient Augusta, queen of the valley of the Lech, was, of all the German imperial cities, most open to Southern influence. Owing to the active relations she maintained with Milan and the West of Italy, the Renaissance had nowhere else in Germany such opportunities of obtaining favour and influence. On the other hand, the trade of Nuremberg was mostly carried on with Venice, which at that time held an exceptional position in Italy, and in more ways than one formed a contrast to the rest of that country. We have already learnt, whilst speaking of Dürer's travels, to look upon Venetian art as to a certain

extent the connecting link between North and South. We have seen how the Renaissance was comparatively late in penetrating from the mainland to the City of the Lagoons, and how it existed there for a time side by side with, but quite distinct from, Gothic naturalism with its sentimental tendencies. The influence, therefore, exercised by Venice over Nuremberg was of a mixed and essentially different character from that of Lombardy on Augsburg. Moreover, the traditions of Lombard art were transmitted from artist to artist by the ordinary channel of direct observation and imitation, whereas theory, reflection, and learning were the means through which Nuremberg was influenced by Venice. Even without discussing the question whether the intervention of classical learning was good or bad for German art, it is evident that to follow out so complicated a connection of cause and effect is no easy matter, and to trace it back to its origin is still more difficult. We must, however, make the attempt under pain of encountering unintelligible facts.

The man to whom everything seems to point as best adapted to have brought about this half-artistic, half-antiquarian influence of Italy on Nuremberg in the fifteenth century, is the physician and historiographer Doctor Hartmann Schedel, who was born at Nuremberg in 1440, and died there in 1514. After having taken the degree of Master of Arts at Leipzig, he went, in 1463, to the University of Padua to study medicine. His sojourn there coincided exactly with the year in which Mantegna, with the aid of some learned friends in the university, developed the system of antiquarianism and realism combined, which was the source of so much success to him up to the time of his being called to the court of the Gonzagas at Mantua in December 1466.* Schedel himself informs us that he was

* Crowe and Cavalcaselle, *History of Painting in North Italy*, vol. i. p. 377.

present at the solemn dissection of a corpse at Padua in 1465, and that on April 17, 1466, he was made licentiate and doctor *in utraque medicina.* At the same time he devoted himself diligently to the study of antiquity. Attracted by a fragment from the Greek journal of the learned antiquary Cyriacus of Ancona, born in 1361, from which he copied notes, inscriptions, and drawings, he subsequently himself compiled a general description of the curiosities of Italy, especially those of Rome and Padua, paying particular attention to inscriptions, "so that posterity might preserve monuments which would give pleasure to the mind and be an encouragement to aim at manifold perfection." Even while he was in full medical practice in Nördlingen, Amberg, and Nuremberg, he continued these studies, and worked at a similar collection of the antiquities and epigraphs to be found in Germany. So late as the year 1512, Wilibald Pirkheimer brought him from Trèves some documents and copies of inscriptions, as well as a drawing of the Roman monument at Igel.*

Schedel tried his hand at drawing, but the specimens that exist in his manuscripts do not give a high idea of his skill. They are the efforts of an unpractised amateur, who has mastered in his youth some details that caught his fancy, but who has never succeeded in getting any farther. The drawings, done with the pen, are hard and angular in outline as in a wood engraving, and represent draped figures, which, but for the names appended to them, might be taken for anything rather than mythological subjects. Their meaning is vague, and their characteristics of the ordinary kind, so that it requires a strong effort of imagination to make out what they are intended for. It would be a mistake, however, to judge of Schedel's conceptions of antique forms and ideas

* Will, *Nurnberger Gelehrtenlexicon.* Otto Jahn, *Aus der Alterthumswissenschaft,* p. 348 et seq.

from his own sketches. They bear as little proportion to one another as do his drawings of the nude to his knowledge of anatomy. The distance between conception and execution is considerable, and art itself can only get over it by degrees. Certainly the unskilled hand of a scholar could not be expected to accurately figure the idea passing through his mind. Schedel's conceptions of the antique, however primitive, must have been infinitely better than his drawings. He had seen with his own eyes and with deep interest the works of ancient sculpture, which were then more numerous in Padua and its environs than they are now. He must also have been acquainted with the collection of plaster casts arranged by Andrea Squarcione in his studio, and have witnessed the use made of them by Squarcione's adopted son, the great Mantegna, which was enough of itself to open any one's eyes to their value. He probably took home with him some casts from the antique; besides preserving many copies drawn by artists, and many Italian engravings, which, together with his precious collection of manuscripts and printed books, afterwards came into the possession of Albert V., duke of Bavaria.

Hartmann Schedel was consequently the forerunner of Winkelmann and other German classical archæologists. He returned to Nuremberg about the year 1480,* and lived there in his own house, in the Unter der Vesten, quite close to Wolgemut. On the 30th November, 1489, Dürer's apprenticeship to Wolgemut came to an end, and in April of the next year he started on his travels. Hardly, however, had he turned his back on Nuremberg when classical learning and German art came together for the first time. In 1491 Michel Wolgemut and Doctor Hartmann Schedel undertook together the illustration of the *Neue Weltchronik*. The painter,

* His name appears for the first time on the roll of burghers in 1481. See Murr, *Journal*, xv. 25 et seq.

who was then fifty-six years old, was necessarily thrown into very close relations with the scholar six years his junior; and their connection thus formed, as it were, a prelude to the famous friendship between Dürer and Wilibald Pirkheimer. It was in Schedel's house that the first intercourse took place between men of learning and artists, who in Germany had till then kept rigidly apart from one another. Indeed, it would hardly be possible to find any earlier instance of their fraternising together. As to the friendship that sprang up between Dürer and Pirkheimer, it had probably nothing to do with being born in the same house, or with there having been any intercourse between the two families, but arose from their frequently meeting one another under the auspices of older friends and companions after their return from their early travels.

We are thus enabled to fix the exact moment when "humanism" first began to knock distinctly at the door of German art. What the result was there are no literary records to show; it can only be judged of by certain pictorial remains, and even these do not furnish us with any clear explanation. Painting was only used for the representation of devotional subjects, or sometimes for portraits. Wood engraving was certainly less restricted in its scope; but as woodcuts were intended for the masses, it was necessary that the subjects represented should be popular and easily understood. Copper engraving alone held an intermediate position. It admitted of finer work, and, without being exactly a common article of sale in the market, yet had a certain circulation, sometimes of a clandestine character, amongst the educated classes of the nation. Humanism found here the easiest means of making its influence upon German art felt. No doubt, in comparison with what the Italian Renaissance owed to the antique, the chiefly theoretical training which German art got from it may seem

unimportant. But it is nevertheless worthy of note that in Germany, as in Italy, free-play in the rendering of form and a healthy naturalism in painting could not have arisen, had not classical learning first prepared the ground.

Already, towards the end of the fifteenth century, there were some famous engravers on copper in Nuremberg and other neighbouring parts of Bavaria and Franconia, who were as much alike in the wealth of their imagination as they differed from one another in their drawing and technical methods. This strongly-marked independence of the early Franconian engravers was just fitted to serve as the basis for a brilliant development of the art, as soon as some one, gifted with wider powers, should unite in himself their separate tendencies. The figures in the engravings attributed to the celebrated Nuremberg wood-engraver Veit Stoss are archaic and stiff; while the draperies with their many folds, and the irregular woolly shading, recall the Netherlands school. The master M. Z., whose name was Matthæus Zasinger, or Zatzinger, is a clever, facile draughtsman; and his style of engraving, though angular and loose, is thoroughly artistic, especially in the treatment of the draperies and landscapes. Mair von Landshut, again, in his firmly outlined figures, and his massive, fantastic buildings, shows a decided leaning to plastic forms. To these three masters, each marked by a distinct individuality, must be added Michel Wolgemut, whose engraved work has not hitherto been either distinguished or classified.

Until the beginning of our century, Wolgemut was considered to have been an engraver as well as a painter, and all the plates marked at the bottom in the centre with the letter W were attributed to him. But on an impression in the Albertina, of the Man of Sorrows between St. John and the Virgin,* which was also engraved by Schongauer, Adam

* *Peintre-graveur*, vi. 325, No. 17.

Bartsch found these words traced by some hand of the sixteenth century: "This engraver was named Wenzel, and was a goldsmith;" and coupling them with the inscription on Schongauer's Death of the Virgin (Bartsch, 22),—"1481, WENCESLAVS DE OLOMVCZ IBIDEM,"—he was led to declare that all the plates marked with a W, and hitherto ascribed to Wolgemut, were Wenzel's work. Of this goldsmith of Olmütz nothing is known, except that he copied Schongauer in his youth, and Dürer in his old age, which could hardly be said of Wolgemut. According to Bartsch, Wolgemut could not have furnished Dürer with the designs for a series of his engravings, because the plates marked W are far inferior to the corresponding ones by Dürer; an argument which, notwithstanding its vagueness, is plausible, seeing that the impressions from the former plates are mostly bad and worn.

Nothing but an absolute adherence to the old rule, that a copy or repetition of a work of art by another master must be inferior to the original in every respect, could have led Bartsch into a mistake similar to the one that he made in the analogous case of Marc Antonio.* However much the truth of such a rule may seem to be affirmed by the experience of the present or the examination of an earlier past, its application to periods when art is following a progressive course, and when technical methods are rapidly gaining in perfection, is open to many exceptions. In the first place, the masters of the fifteenth century had not by any means that morbid idea of originality which exacts that each new work should differ in every point—subject, composition, and execution—from the preceding ones. Much as they wished to extend the field of their representations, yet they readily lingered over the old beloved and well-known subjects. As in classical art, so in the art of the Renaissance, the same

* Comp. Thausing, *Marco Dente von Ravenna*, in the *Archiv für zeich. Künste*, 1870.

biblical, mythological, or profane stories, the same typical figures, always recur; and individuality is shown not in the choice of a subject, but in the method of its treatment. From an instinctive conviction of the all-powerfulness of form in the domain of art, the great masters of all times never hesitated to borrow from others what seemed to them in harmony with their own feelings and worthy of imitation. In this incessant seeking and finding, giving and taking, lies the secret of a healthy existence for art. It might be compared with the change of matter in organic nature, and called the perpetual change of form in the intellectual world.

Under such circumstances it is sometimes rash, when considering two works of art which closely resemble each other, to value the one highly as the original, and reject the other unconditionally as a copy. In many cases, where there is no difficulty in distinguishing between the two, a difference of opinion may be justified by a consideration of the distance which separates the copyist, in time, in place, and in spirit, from the original author. A good copy, in fact, is a thing apart; and however exact it may be, the earliest and ablest attempt will succeed no better than the most accurate machine in rendering the qualities of the original. To attain such an end, requires the aid of exceptional conditions; such, for instance, as that a highly-gifted pupil should have made it his whole ambition to surpass the works of his master. In copying Wolgemut's engravings, Dürer's intimate knowledge of his methods of composition and execution served him in very good stead. He had an insight into his master's manner of working such as no one else could have, and at the same time his own independence of judgment enabled him to distinguish the good work from the inferior, and to take his own line accordingly. While Wolgemut's engravings, either because he was trying to discover new methods, or because he employed pupils of

different degrees of skill, exhibit an infinite variety of execution, from the rich vigorous texture of the "Great Hercules" to the fine dry-point work in the "Turkish Family," or in the circular little "St. George" after Schongauer—from, in fact, Italian breadth to Dutch delicacy of finish—Dürer adopted a happy medium between the two. Equally removed from both extremes, his plates bear a special character of their own, which never varies except when he is manifestly making an experiment; and so clearly and persistently did he develop this style that under his hands the art of engraving suddenly attained to the highest perfection. Never has such precise drawing been combined in the same plate with such delicate execution, admirable as the work produced since Dürer's time has been in both respects.

The technical perfection of Dürer's work necessarily made a deep impression upon Bartsch, who was himself an engraver, and whose feeling for the subtle delicacies of the art was all the more lively from the fact that his contemporaries were still far from discriminating and appreciating the different historical forms of style. He consequently claimed originality for Dürer's engravings on the score of the great technical ease displayed in them, contrasting it with shortcomings natural to an art still in its infancy. In vain it was timidly suggested by William Young Ottley,* and afterwards more decidedly asserted by Sotzmann,† that in all probability the engravings marked W were not copies after Dürer, but originals. Bartsch's opinion that there were no engravings by Wolgemut, or, if there were, that they must be unsigned ones, was still adhered to. The good old tradition, that Dürer learned engraving on copper from

* *An Inquiry into the History of Engraving;* London, 1816, ii. 682.

† *Deutsches Kunstblatt*, 1854, p. 307.

Wolgemut, as well as painting, has thus been interrupted, and the thread of it must again be picked up.

Quad von Kinkelbach, who does not even know Wolgemut's name, in his *Teutscher Nation Herrlichkeit* ("The Splendour of the German Nation"), published at Cologne, 1609, says of Dürer: "He notably copied line for line some of the pieces after W. In the Great Hercules, the copy is inferior to the original, but in others, such as the Sea-Rider, the St. Jerome in the Desert, the Prodigal Son, the Virgin and Child with the Monkey, the Doctor's Dream, and the Lady on the Horse, Dürer bears off the palm." The author of the pamphlet, *Von kunstlichen Handwerken in Nürnberg* ("Art Handicrafts in Nuremberg"),* repeats this with the explanation: "the letter W stands for Wolgemut." This anonymous writer of Nuremberg displays a certain independence of judgment, by adding to the "Great Hercules" the "Little Courier," as one of the engravings in which Dürer did not surpass the original. All the old Nuremberg catalogues of engravings agree in explaining the monogram W to mean Wolgemut. In the account of the Derschau† collection it is stated:—"This much is certain, that the three plates marked W which were also engraved by A. Dürer, namely, the Amymone, the Dream, and the Knight and the Lady, were composed by Wolgemut; for these plates, at the end of the last century, were still in Knorr's shop at Nuremberg, and entered in the firm's books as having been bought centuries before from Wolgemut's heirs." That these three plates were preserved down to the present day, is proved by the numberless modern impressions of them; and the same may be said of the engraving called "W.'s Four Witches," the plate of which was still to be seen in 1828 at Möhringen near Stuttgart.‡ Though these traditions may be

* *Archiv für zeich. Künste*, xii. 50.

† Nuremberg, 1825, sect. ii. p. 9.

‡ *Deutsches Kunstblatt*, 1828, p. 159.

looked upon as by no means conclusive proofs, yet it will be granted that they call for a reconsideration of the facts. As the ordinary impressions of Wolgemut's plates are to be found in most collections side by side with Dürer's engravings, it will be easy for any one to follow our comparison, which, to be convincing, will have to go into details.

Two unsigned plates which Bartsch * was the first to include amongst Dürer's works rank at present as the earliest of that master's engravings. Heinecken,† who speaks of them as anonymous works of the fifteenth century, thus describes them :—"No. 277. A wild man seated in a landscape, and holding by her dress a girl, whom he is trying to draw into his lap by force. Above him is an empty scroll. No. 278. A horseman, looking round as he gallops towards the right, and with a whip in his hand. By the same master. Albert Dürer also engraved it." By these last words Heinecken certainly meant nothing more than that Dürer had engraved a similar subject, and he had in his mind the "Little Courier," or "Post-boy." ‡ There is no exact reproduction of the so-called "Great Courier," described by Heinecken; and, indeed, but two impressions of the plate exist.§ Nor is there any known repetition of the "Little Courier" marked with the W. ‖ In short, Bartsch enlarged upon Heinecken's suggestions. He recognised such similarity between these

* Nos. 92 and 81.

† *Neue Nachrichten*, i. 344.

‡ Bartsch, No. 80.

§ One in the Dresden Cabinet, the other in the Imperial Library at Vienna.

‖ There is, however, an engraving of a very primitive character which differs in some small details only from Dürer's "Little Courier." A damaged impression of it now before me certainly has no signature; but below, in the middle of the foreground, there is a white spot, not big enough for Dürer's monogram, but which would hold Wolgemut's smaller one. It remains to be considered whether this sheet may be looked upon as an impression from an original of Wolgemut's. It is dark, and thickly printed, similar to the "Great Hercules" of W., and is in that more vigorous niello-like method which may have seemed preferable to Quad and the Nuremberg Anonymus.

two plates and the earlier engravings of Dürer, which he considered to be original, that he felt himself authorized to class them with Dürer's works, even though only as first attempts, and copies of an earlier master. Who, then, can this master have been?

Both engravings not only show flat antiquated drawing, with poor modelling, they betray also by their strongly-marked outlines, and the sharply-contrasted lights and shadows, an eye accustomed to engraving on wood. This idea is borne out by the small amount of skill in the handling of the burin, which is especially shown in the plate called the "Ravisher," a composition about the meaning of which there can be no doubt. It is the struggle for existence: Death, represented as a savage—a dried-up, hollow-eyed grey-beard—is trying to offer violence to a young girl, in burgher costume, who represents Life. This engraving seems to be still older than the "Great Courier." Its hard angular lines recall the master M. Z., and show little acquaintance with the use of the burin, which has even slipped in places. Everything, down to the scrolls over the heads of the figures, points to a period before that in which Dürer began to work. Nay, even if Wolgemut be looked upon as its author, it must be numbered among his earliest attempts on copper. A very deceptive old copy of this plate exists, in which even the mistakes are closely imitated. Perhaps it was done by Dürer as an exercise in the early days of his apprenticeship; but this, of course, is a mere supposition.

The oldest known engravings undoubtedly by Dürer are the "Holy Family with the Locust," * and the "Love Offer." † Both are signed with his usual monogram, and cannot therefore have been engraved before 1496. Nor

* Bartsch, 44. † Bartsch, 93.

are they originals, but appear rather to be copies probably from old engravings by Wolgemut.* The work in the Holy Family shows that Dürer had as yet little facility in the use of the burin; though a certain want of decision in the strokes, and their sharp-pointed character which is quite in Zatzinger's manner, may have been peculiar to the original. What is characteristic of Dürer is the way in which the flesh shadows are formed by short strokes, all going in one direction,—a method which, like the ideal head of the Virgin, recalls Italian influences. A smoother and more pleasing technique is already visible in the "Love Offer." Old age, whether man or woman, purchasing the affection of youth with gold, was a common subject in those days.† The fact that in Dürer's engraving the old man plunges his left hand into the bag, and that the woman also holds out her left hand to him, confirms our supposition that Dürer copied from an old original direct on to his plate; so that in his impressions the picture is turned the other way. Whether a so-called copy reversed, of which modern impressions exist, is the original by Wolgemut, and served as Dürer's model, I have not been able to determine.

Of the pair of lovers taking a walk, called "The Promenade," ‡ or "The Knight and the Lady," we also possess the reversed original by Wolgemut. § Wolgemut's method of engraving in this plate is very antiquated. The powerful outlines, unrelieved by any delicate shading off, make the forms appear flat. The fashionably-dressed lady walks

* W. Y. Ottley thought he had discovered at the British Museum the original of this Holy Family in a plate in which the W. had been scratched out and replaced by Schongauer's monogram drawn with the pen. In this same plate a lizard is substituted for the locust.

† Compare Springer, *Bilder aus der Kunstgesch.* pp. 186, 206. A drawing of this subject at Erlangen is copied from Dürer's engraving.

‡ Bartsch, No. 94.

§ Bartsch, *Peintre-graveur*, vi. 337, No. 50.

towards the right with all the cold stately sentiment of the old style, already foreign to Dürer; while her pointed, harsh, angular features are equally opposed to his peculiar type. This plate, like that previously mentioned, is one of those "Dance of Death" pictures so popular in the middle ages, in which life in its full bloom is brought into the most glaring possible contrast with corruption. But the violent incongruity of the forced embrace is none of Dürer's conception; nor is the mocking scorn of the dancing skeleton. What may be compared with it are the wild dance of the five skeletons in Schedel's *Weltchronik*, and the Christ wrestling with Death in Wolgemut's *Schatzbehalter*. Later, Hans Holbein the Younger tried, by making a joke of it, to soften the horrors of this favourite contrast, which appealed to the rough death-fearing spirit of the age. No such expedient ever occurred to Dürer, possessed though he too was of a strong vein of humour. For him death was a more serious, though a less fearful, thing; it was not a naked monster, nor yet a mischievous buffoon.* It is no bald skeleton, but a lusty satyr, who kisses softly the blooming woman in the "Death's Coat of Arms," an engraving of 1503. Whenever a skeleton does appear in Dürer's compositions, it is generally draped, and stands quietly, holding an hour-glass, like a warning apparition. It is so represented on the fugitive sheet of 1510, and in the Emperor Maximilian's prayer-book,† as also in the engraving, of 1513, of "The Knight, Death, and the Devil." Only once did Dürer represent Death as a

* Compare Thausing, *Hans Baldung Grien und nicht Dürer*, in the *Jahrbuch für Kunstw.* ii. 215–217.

† He is here once represented with his sickle, pursuing a flying horseman. Professor Bertini, of Milan, has a very delicate pen drawing of 1514, showing a bishop (St. Nicholas?) followed by two deacons, under a portico; on his right is Death as a skeleton, draped in a cloak, and holding a spade. There is a facsimile of this drawing in Giuseppe Vallardi's *Trionfo e danza della morte*, &c.; Milan, 1859.

naked skeleton, in all its horror, and that was in a rough chalk drawing, now belonging to Mr. Malcolm. He is seated, bending forward, on a miserable shambling nag, round whose neck dangles a large bell; with his right hand he clutches the mane and props himself on his elbow, while with his left he trails his scythe after him, as if tired out with work. On his head is a coronet, and in front of him is written, in large letters, "MEMENTO MEI, 1505," an allusion probably to the great plague which then ravaged Nuremberg. It is King Death riding over the land. There is nothing ludicrous, nothing satirical, and no offensive contrast; the simple grandeur of the conception prevents any feeling of horror. Alfred Rethel was the first in our own days to catch something of a corresponding spirit. The way in which Dürer depicts Death shows, too, that his sympathies belonged less to the middle ages than to more modern times. But the same cannot be said of Michel Wolgemut, to whom the composition of the so-called "Promenade" is attributed. For instance, the way in which the grass in the foreground is represented by two strokes meeting together in one point is quite in the old style. Dürer, in his reproduction, abandoned this antiquated method, which reminds one of wood-engraving. His copy, in accordance with the custom then general, is engraved direct from an impression of Wolgemut's, and so appears reversed when printed. But Dürer was not so careful in this instance as he afterwards showed himself to be, for he made no change in the position of the young man's sword, so that in his engraving it appears girt to the right, instead of to the left, side.*

* The meaning of the letters A. M. I., which can be distinctly read in Wolgemut's engraving on the border of the lady's robe, near her shoulder, was evidently unknown to Dürer; for in his plate only the A. and the I. are clear, while in the Italian copy after Dürer, ascribed to Marc Antonio, these two letters become mere ornamentation. Israel von Mecken, again, has put his own initials I. V. M. in their place.

Let us now consider those plates of Dürer's which Quad von Kinkelbach expressly describes as copies. "The Doctor's Dream," or "The Dream,"* is a pictorial satire on senile lust. The sleeper behind the stove, into whose ears the devil is blowing with a pair of bellows, seems to be a portrait. In the foreground, Venus and Cupid appear as the visions of his heated fancy. Cupid is trying in a comic way to walk upon stilts. Here again Dürer has merely reproduced an engraving of Wolgemut's, reversed.† A careful examination and comparison of the Venus on the two plates leaves no doubt as to the originality of the one marked W. Unlike most of Dürer's conceptions, this slender female form displays a certain conventional symmetry, a gracefulness of attitude, and a long, delicate profile, which indicate not so much study of nature as an indirect following of the antique. The whole of the upper part of the woman's body is, by Wolgemut, regularly set in a frame of rich flowing locks. Dürer, to render it more natural, has made breaks in the masses of hair, and left out parts. In doing this he committed a slight oversight which proves unmistakably that he was making a copy. The end of the lock of hair which falls from the head of Venus on the side turned away from us is shown by Wolgemut under the arm-pit. Dürer, on the other hand, though he carefully outlined this lock on the plate, as can be seen from the impressions, and continued it between the head and shoulder, did not finish the end under the arm-pit, but filled in the space thus left empty with cross shading. This will appear more clearly from the annexed drawing. Insignificant as the difference may be, it can only be explained by the fact that Dürer, possibly through an oversight, was in this slight particular untrue to his original; for, in the

* Bartsch, 76.

† Bartsch, *Peintre-graveur*, vi. 337, No. 49.

reverse case, and taking Dürer's to have been the original drawing, then the supposed copyist W must be credited with having divined what the author's entirely unexpressed

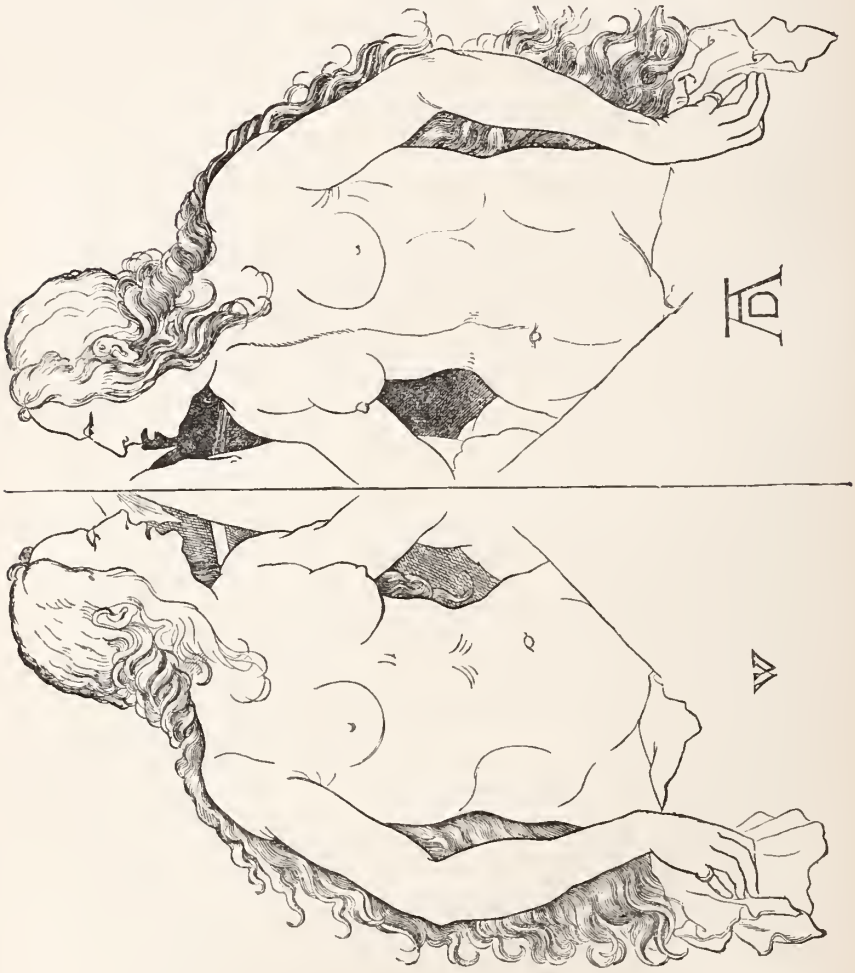


FIGURE OF THE VENUS IN "THE DREAM" AS SEEN IN WOLGEMUT'S ORIGINAL AND DÜRER'S COPY.

intention was—an explanation which, in so trifling a matter, no one accustomed to study questions of this kind could agree to.

Another example of the same kind of thing is to be

found in the engraving called "The Four Witches."* Not even the best impressions of Dürer's plate enable us to tell with any certainty what is intended to be seen in the space between the elbow and the hip of the woman, whose back is turned to us; but if we look at the original plate by Wolgemut, which is turned the same way, we see at once that it is the left hand of the woman standing behind, and that she is holding up with it the long drapery that falls away on either side. The accompanying drawings prove that Wolgemut alone was quite clear as to the composition, for it is only in his engraving that, as we have tried to show in outline, the perspective of the part that is hidden can be made to agree with what is visible; in Dürer's no such agreement is possible, even if the vaguely indicated hand be enlarged to twice its natural length. Both plates, the original and the copy, have the date 1497 on a ball hanging in the middle at the top. This date, from its having been considered as that at which the engraving was executed, has hitherto caused much confusion in the chronology of Dürer's works. Nagler† felt himself compelled, even on technical grounds, to raise objections to its being so considered; and his observations further led him to the conclusion that the work of the master W was the original, afterwards reproduced by Dürer and all the later copyists. This view too was strengthened by the examination of an earlier impression of Wolgemut's plate, on fine, close paper, with a very old watermark, and in such good condition, that it destroyed all doubt as to the superiority of his engraving to Dürer's. No sufficient light has yet been thrown on this difficult question to allow of any conjectures even as to the order of Wolgemut's engravings and Dürer's reproductions of them; but there can be no hesitation in admitting that

* Bartsch, 75.

† *Monogrammisten*, i. 168, No. 33.



A PART OF WOLGEMUT'S ENGRAVING OF "THE FOUR WITCHES."



A PART OF DÜRER'S ENGRAVING OF "THE FOUR WITCHES."

the date 1497 refers only to the completion of the original plate by Wolgemut.*

The meaning which the artist intended to convey by the representation of these four nude women of different ages is not clear, and has, indeed, always been a matter of doubt. At their feet is a skull and a bone, and in the background on the left lurks the devil. The idea that they are meant for the three Graces is disputed by Sandrart, who sees in them four witches. Much may be said in favour of this view, which is still the most general, if we consider the circumstances of the times when the plate was done. In 1484, Pope Innocent VIII. published the notorious bull "*Summis desiderantes*," in which orders are given for the persecution of witches in Germany. In 1487 the Inquisitor Jacob Sprenger composed his *Malleus maleficarum* (the "Witches' Hammer"), printed first at Cologne in 1489, and afterwards, in 1494, by Anton Koburger at Nuremberg, where a second edition of the work appeared two years later, as well as other books on the theory of witchcraft. It was natural enough, therefore, for a Nuremberg painter to think of representing some witches' rites; and the letters O. G. H. on the ball might then be taken to mean, in Sprenger's Latin, *Obsidium*

* The indifferent reversed copy with the monogram S within H, and a small knife near it, is dated 1498. Nicoletto da Modena's copy (Heller, No. 865), also reversed, with some alterations, and called the Judgment of Paris, has this inscription on the ball: "DETVR PVLCRIORI 1500." Another copy is the niello (Duchesne, *Essai sur les Nielles*, No. 234), in which the fourth woman is said to be Eris, and the ball above an apple. The idea lately revived, that the original represented the Judgment of Paris, has been completely refuted by Herr Allihn (*Kunstchronik* 1872, vii. 187). A drawing belonging to Herr Petersen, of Nuremberg, is an exact copy of Dürer's engraving. Compare especially the thorough and scholarly researches into the history of some of Dürer's engravings by Herr Max Allihn (*Dürerstudien*, Leipzig, 1871). Herr A. Rosenberg's long dissertations on this subject (*Dürerstudien*, in the *Zeitschr. für bild. Kunst*. viii. 284, 350, and ix. 254), must, on the other hand, be accepted with reserve.

generis humani. This interpretation of its meaning probably soon became popular, and may easily have been handed down as a tradition to Sandrart's time. Very likely, too, it was favoured by the artist as calculated to increase the sale of the print.

At bottom, however, Wolgemut, like the scholar to whom he undoubtedly had recourse for advice, merely had certain mythological persons in his mind, though who they were cannot now be ascertained. That there was in the picture, at the same time, in accordance with the taste of the age, the underlying moral meaning how death and the devil lurk behind woman's loveliness and woman's vanity is natural, and does not exclude a more decidedly objective explanation. But it was not really either with the Witches' Hammer, or with classical learning, or with pointing a moral, that the artist was concerned. What he aimed at was the representation of the female form in all its beauty. These four nude women are a study of nature rather than a conventional conception; and they prove beyond a doubt the real feeling of the master with regard to the ban which had so long rested alike on the antique, on nature, and on woman.

Allowing then that in these two instances Wolgemut's engravings were the originals, we need not enter into the same detail in comparing and examining Dürer's other copies. The "Rape of Amymone,"* called by Dürer the "Sea-Monster" (*Meerwunder*), by Quad the "Sea-Rider" (*Seereiter*), and by the anonymous Nuremberg writer the "Sea-Robber" (*Seeräuber*), is engraved, the same way, after Wolgemut, who, no doubt, had in his mind the idea of a Nereid borne by a Triton, as seen on ancient sarcophagi. The body and the type of head of the Amymone a good

* Bartsch, 71.

deal resemble the Venus in "The Dream." Her open mouth, calling for aid, is in strange contrast with the repose of her attitude. In his copy of this engraving, Dürer has omitted what looks like a meteor or comet, and has brought the shading of the sky on the right of the precipice too abruptly to an end with a long horizontal line; while the fan-like foliage to the right of the Triton's head, which interferes so curiously with the view of the shore, is merely the result of an oversight, its place in the original being taken by a tuft of hair on the head of the old man. Wolgemut's engraving was originally larger than Dürer's, but the later impressions of it were taken after the left side of the plate had been cut off so far that the toes of Amymone's foot and the figure of her sister rising from bathing in the background are wanting.

The relation between original and copy is more difficult to trace in another mythological engraving, the "Great Hercules," or "Jealousy"*—and in "The Virgin and Child with the monkey,"† to which we shall return later. The "Lady on the Horse" (*kleine Reiterin*),‡ on account of the arms of the trooper accompanying her, was copied by Dürer without being reversed. In Wolgemut's plate, which is smaller, though the dimensions of the figures are the same, the right background has evidently been left unfinished, while Dürer, to get over the sudden transition to the white paper, has introduced some shading. Of the "Great St. Jerome in the Wilderness," or the "Penance of St. Jerome,"§ and of the "Prodigal Son,"‖ I have seen no original signed with the W, but there can be no mistake about the antique conception and type in the former being Wolgemut's; besides which the principal figure resembles that of St. Joseph in the Holy Family with the locust.¶

* Bartsch, 73. † Bartsch, 42. ‡ Bartsch, 82.
§ Bartsch, 61. ‖ Bartsch, 28. ¶ Bartsch, 44.

"The Prodigal Son" is also a very early work of Dürer's, and one is struck at finding in him already a power of conception so profound and at the same time so full of simplicity. Still more striking, however, is the decidedly faulty drawing, which makes the way the legs are joined to the trunk quite incomprehensible. In the British Museum is a pen drawing of Dürer's engraving reversed, in which the man is only lightly sketched in, while the swine are carefully finished, and the little pigs left out altogether. It is just these differences, and its being the reverse way to the engraving, that go to prove the originality of the drawing, which has, rightly as we think, been ascribed to Dürer. Quad, who considers the Prodigal Son to be one of Dürer's copies after Wolgemut, is therefore in error, and can only have inferred the existence of a previous work by Wolgemut from a certain resemblance in style. There is no doubt that the profile of the man kneeling in prayer at the pig-trough exhibits the same type as the Great Courier; but it has been difficult hitherto to point unhesitatingly to an original by Wolgemut,* and I do not myself feel able as yet to come to any decision on the point.

* There is a copy after Dürer (so-called), turned the same way (Heller, No. 478), in which the three windows of the buildings in the background are, instead of being placed irregularly, in a horizontal line. It is rarer than Dürer's engraving, and is superior to it in many points. In the Berlin Museum there is an impression on thin paper, of a plate narrower but higher and unfortunately rather worn, which might well lead us to suppose that in it we have to do with an original by Wolgemut. The engraving is in the reversed sense to Dürer's, and differs from it in various important particulars. The three windows in the background are, as in the British Museum drawing, all on the same level, and have, besides, arched tops, and mouldings. The foliage of the tree in the middle is in woolly masses in the old style, still adhered to by Wolgemut; and the buildings in the background are surmounted by a church with a tower similar in its architectural features—the two stories, the polygonal roofs, and the half-moon above—to those in Schedel's Chronicle. Unfortunately the Berlin impression is not early enough for any conclusive opinion to be formed as to its authorship. The absence of the W is of little

What most spoils even the early impressions of Wolgemut's engravings is their black, dirty, smeared look. He seems, either from ignorance or carelessness, to have neglected to insure the success of his work by a suitable and careful method of printing. Dürer, on the other hand, knew how to make impressions even of large plates look smooth, soft, and unblotted; and as a consequence his copies threw Wolgemut's original engravings into the background. Since Quad's time, old prints from Wolgemut's plates have become very rare, as indeed is the case with all engravings which were not protected at their origin, or subsequently, by some such sign of merit as the monogram of a Dürer or a Schongauer. The W in the middle of old German engravings did not carry weight sufficient to insure their preservation, and when it was no longer said to refer to Wolgemut, it became still more disregarded. But if once the fact is again admitted that Dürer was Wolgemut's pupil in the art of engraving, and that the supposed copies by Wolgemut are in reality originals from which Dürer copied, increased attention will be directed to these plates, and we shall be able to form a better idea of Wolgemut's work as an engraver than is at present possible.

It is indeed no easy matter to readily accept the conclusions which self-evident facts, even more than historical traditions, inexorably force upon us. We are asked to believe that an imposing number of creations, which have helped considerably to form our estimate of Dürer, and

weight, as, if it was there originally, it may easily have been erased by a subsequent possessor of the plate. On the reversed copy by Giovanni Antonio da Brescia of Dürer's Prodigal Son (Heller, Nos. 480 and 482, two proofs of the same plate), the name of the Italian has been effaced, and Dürer's monogram inserted below in the left corner. The same thing, therefore, may have happened to other plates of Wolgemut's that have been retouched; and, in this case, late impressions of these defaced plates may exist amongst the copies with Dürer's monogram.

among which are some of the plates the most pleasing to our modern tastes, and the best fitted to prove Dürer's perception of beauty, are not his; and we are compelled at the same time to ascribe them to Wolgemut, with whose work, under the only phase that we know it, they appear in no way to correspond. In short, we are called upon to construct a reputation for Wolgemut out of materials which have hitherto served to form part of the fabric of Dürer's greatness. In addition too to any general objections to this process, there are certain special ones. Dürer's "Virgin and Child with the monkey"* is a reversed copy of Wolgemut's engraving, inferior in effect to the original design. The head of the Virgin, for instance, has lost all its loveliness and delicacy, and has become harder and flatter. Everything, indeed, indicates that Dürer made use of a late impression of Wolgemut's plate after it had been already worn out by use, and that his copy was altogether done more rapidly. Even in the best impressions of Dürer's plate, some things are wanting; as, for instance, the bent hinges on the window-shutters of the little *Weiherhaus*, and one of the two indispensable ropes for fastening the small boat; the half-moon, too, in the sky, is omitted. Other minute alterations and differences which betray the copy are the smoother, but less truthful, rendering of the monkey's coat, the want of distinctness in the attitude of the clumsy-looking child, the inaccurate drawing of the hand holding the bird, on which the nail of the forefinger is wanting, and the scattered way, so different from Wolgemut's manner, in which the grasses in the foreground are put in. The method of execution is like that of the Prodigal Son.

There is a water-colour drawing of Dürer's in the British Museum † which represents the little *Weiherhaus* on the

* Bartsch, 42.

† See above, p. 124.

Gleishammer, surrounded by the same wide-spreading landscape as the one in the background of this engraving, only reversed. At first sight, it looks as if this drawing had served as the study for the plate. The writing on it, too, appears to be in Dürer's hand, if not the appended monogram. But there are marked differences. In the drawing, for instance, the view of the house is taken more from below, and is much less minute, but at the same time in better aërial perspective.* Added to this, the child with the upper part of its body turned round, in the "Virgin and Child with the monkey," is decidedly Italian in motive, and recalls, in its heavy forms, Lorenzo di Credi and his school.† There is a somewhat analogous coloured pen drawing of Dürer's in the Albertina at Vienna, representing the Virgin, or rather the Holy Family, for St. Joseph is seen approaching in the middle distance, in a landscape with a number of animals. A wide range of steep mountains occupies the background, in which is seen the annunciation of the glad tidings to the shepherds. In the foreground are a great number of different animals, birds, and insects, among which may be distinguished a half-shaven poodle, a fox tied by a rope, a stag-beetle, a crab, a dragon-fly, a snail, a horned-owl in a hollow stump, a parrot, a woodpecker, a robin-redbreast, a water-wagtail, &c. Interspersed with these are a variety of flowers, a tall iris and a peony being especially noticeable. All this detail is done in the finished manner that Wolgemut delighted in, and much more carefully than the figure of the Virgin, which is merely sketched in with the pen. She is seated, with a book in her lap, looking down at the Holy Child, who

* This same background occurs in the engraving by Giulio Campagnola (Bartsch, 5), of the Rape of Ganymede; and, reversed, in the landscape by Robetta (Bartsch, 4), called "Our First Parents."

† As for instance, in the Virgin and Child with St. Julian and St. Nicholas, in the Louvre, executed it is true at a later period; and the circular Virgin and Child in the grand-ducal gallery at Oldenburg.

holds a bunch of strawberries in his hand. The creatures peacefully assembled round seem to be rendering her a spontaneous and natural homage. Unfortunately the chief figure is not equal in treatment to the accessories, the draperies especially being undefined and confused. The attitude recalls that in the "Virgin and Child with the monkey;" but the face is of the broader type with a short nose, often seen in Dürer's later works. An earlier design for this subject, with some differences, and on a larger scale, and merely sketched lightly in with the pen, exists in the Blasius collection. The water-colour drawing dates clearly from Dürer's early period, soon after his return from his travels.*

The relation in which Dürer stood to Wolgemut, as regards the first composition of the "Great Hercules," or "Jealousy," is still more confused.† Among the pen drawings after Mantegna's engravings, which Dürer either brought back with him from Italy in 1494 or did directly after his return, there is an Orpheus beset by the Ciconian women. This drawing is praised by Sandrart, to whom it belonged, and who made up a story about its having been the diploma work presented by Dürer on his admission to the Nuremberg guild of painters. It is now in the Harzen collection, in the Kunsthalle at Hamburg, together with the very rare Italian engraving from which the figures are taken, exactly the same way,‡ only the landscape background having been altered by Dürer. Orpheus,

* The pencil lines on it are by a later hand. It has been often copied in oils. One of these copies is in the Doria Gallery at Rome, under the name of Breughel; and there is another belonging to the Duca di Cassano at Naples. The original watercolour was engraved by Egidius Sadeler.

† Bartsch, 73.

‡ C. Meyer, *Die Harzen Commeterische Sammlung*, in the *Archiv für zeichn. Künste*, xvi. 88; W. Y. Ottley, *Inquiry*, i. 403; Passavant, *Peintre-graveur*, v. 47.

clothed merely in a small cloak, and seen from the front, has fallen on his knees, while on either side of him two women, in antique draperies, set upon him with cudgels; on the left, a child is running away. Instead of the lute, Dürer has placed an antique lyre in the foreground, with the genuine mark, "1494 A.D.," underneath it; and the nondescript-looking tree behind the fleeing child is replaced by a fig-tree very like the one in Mantegna's engraving of the Entombment.* The rock in the middle, crowned by a fortified town, is exchanged for a lofty group of trees, very similar to those in the engraving of Hercules; only that an open book hangs in the branches, and a scroll twines through them at the top, with the inscription, "Orfeus der Erst puseran." † The woman to the left, seen from the front, in the act of lifting her arm to strike, and the boy running away are found, in Dürer's engraving, respectively in the middle, and on the right. His pen drawing is higher and less wide than the old Italian engraving, and the figures consequently are on a larger scale, and executed in much more detail. It is, however, far surpassed by the Hercules engraving, both in the fulness and proportion of the forms and in the firmness and feeling shown in the drawing of the lines.

Since Sotzmann acknowledged that the "Hercules" of the Netherlands Diary was identical with the engraving called "Jealousy" or "The Great Satyr," there can be no doubt as to the meaning of the composition. It is a free representation of the story of Hercules, Nessus, and Dejanira, as it was understood in the middle ages. The Nymph, indeed, lies in the lap of a Satyr; but, though the tradition of depicting Centaurs with horses' bodies had been preserved by German art up to the eleventh and twelfth centuries,

* Bartsch, xiii. 317, No. 2.

† "Orpheus the first sodomite." *Buzerante* is the Venetian for *bugierante*.

as may be seen from the bronze reliefs on the doors of the cathedral of Augsburg, and on the Korssun door of the Church of St. Sophia at Novgorod, it had, since that time, been forgotten, and neither the German nor the Italian masters of the early Renaissance were particular as to the difference between Centaurs and Satyrs.* Hercules, as a cuckold, threatens the guilty pair with a cudgel, as does also the woman standing in the middle.† Who she is, is not clear; she may, perhaps, like the child running away, be taken from that drawing of Dürer's of 1494, and introduced merely to fill up the composition. Even the stiff attitude of Hercules can be partly explained as being a reversed adaptation of the positions of the arm and leg in the other woman in the same drawing with her back turned, who is striking Orpheus. We may, indeed, go so far as to say that the drawings by Dürer, of the same date, after Mantegna's engravings, already referred to, must have supplied him with several motives. For instance, the figure of Dejanira is a reproduction in reverse of the Nereid to the left, in the "Battle of the Sea-gods," carried on the back of a Triton;‡ and the Satyr with the flattened profile, the shaggy loins, and the hair on his head shooting out leaves, is taken from the drawing after Mantegna's "Bacchanal with a vat."§

The matter would be simple enough if we could agree

* See von Sallet (*Kunstchronik*, viii. 337, and *Untersuchungen über A. Dürer*, 17, et seq). Hans Sebald Beham calls a Satyr with a woman on his lap (Bartsch, 108), DEIANIRA and NESSVS. Heinrich Aldegrever does the same (Bartsch, 93); and he elsewhere gives the Centaurs of the Hercules myth goats' feet (Bartsch, 92). George Penz, too, represents Chiron, to whom Thetis entrusted the education of Achilles, as a Satyr with a jawbone in his hand, and the inscription, ACHILLEM . HVNC . MAGISTRO . SVO . CHIRONE . 1543 (Bartsch, 90). See also the account given in Chapter X. of Dürer's "Satyr Family," or "The Little Satyr."

† Vasari's description (ed. Lem. ix. 261) of a Diana beating a Nymph, who has taken refuge in the arms of a Satyr, is purely imaginary.

‡ Bartsch, No. 17.

§ Bartsch, No. 20. See above, p. 115.

with the hitherto accepted opinion and look upon Dürer's engraving as an original work, for which all these copies, collected during the young artist's travels, had served him as studies. But this will not do; for the corresponding engraving by Wolgemut claims, in spite of everything, to be the original. Happily, I have been able to compare two first-rate impressions of both works; an early very powerful one of Wolgemut's plate, in the Imperial Library at Vienna, and the only proof existent of Dürer's in the Albertina. In this latter, on the left, the Satyr, down to his leg, as well as all but the head, arm, and veil of Dejanira, and, on the right, the whole part below and to the right of Hercules, are left white, and only lightly outlined with the dry point. Here and there are to be seen some quite light diagonal lines which probably served to indicate the contour; one of these, over the toes of the woman in the act of striking, remains even in the completed engraving. The most remarkable difference, however, as has been already pointed out by Bartsch, is, that on the upper part of Wolgemut's plate, on the left, are four birds flying in the air, while on the right are two other bigger ones fighting with one another, a sort of parody, in fact, on what is going on below.* This, too, is the meaning of the bird in the hand of the child running away,† which Dürer retained, while he omitted, possibly through forgetfulness, the birds in the air.‡ Wolgemut's foliage is, as usual with him, in ball-like masses, while Dürer has given it a more open and less rigid appearance. Besides these points of difference, the figures in

* Bartsch, *Peintre-graveur*, vi. 339, No. 53. For the meaning of the birds, see M. Allihn's *Dürerstudien*, 77.

† The child is probably meant for Cupid.

‡ It may further be observed that the space left in the middle of the ground, though big enough for the W., would not contain Dürer's larger monogram, in order to introduce which he shortened his strokes on the right, so that they appear cut off obliquely on each side of the A.

Wolgemut's engraving are altogether drawn with greater accuracy and decision, Hercules' left arm in particular being less stiff and hard. Quad von Kinkelbach was quite right in saying that Wolgemut's "Great Hercules" was superior to Dürer's.

If further proof were needed of the early date to which this engraving must be assigned, it is to be found not merely in the fact that certain motives, taken from its background, occur in Marc Antonio's engraving, "Mars and Venus," of 1508,* but in the existence of another of this engraver's works, "The Satyr and the Slumbering Woman," where also there is a child holding a bird, which is declared by Bartsch† to be one of his earliest attempts. If this engraving is turned the other way it is easy to see that the plate is only a fragment of a larger one, on which had been begun a reversed copy of the Hercules of Wolgemut and Dürer; the outlines of the legs and the trunk can still be clearly seen. Even supposing the substituted engraving is not by Marc Antonio, it belongs, at any rate, to the fifteenth century, or to a time before which Dürer's engraving, if it was an original work, could not have existed; for Dürer was not sufficiently skilled either in technical methods or in the treatment of the naked body, during the first years after his return from his travels, to have attempted such large plates by himself.

A smaller engraving, that Quad von Kinkelbach does not mention, called "The Cook and his Wife," or "The Cook and the Housekeeper,"‡ a stout man holding a cooking utensil in his hand and with a bird on his shoulder, and a woman walking daintily beside him, appears to be also a copy after Wolgemut.§ And the small archaic figure of the

* Bartsch, xiv. No. 345.
† Bartsch, No. 285. ‡ Bartsch, 84.
§ Passavant, *Peintre-graveur*, ii. No. 76, mentions a so-called copy by W. at Oxford, which I suspect to be an original.

Virgin, on a half-moon, wearing no crown, but only a frontlet, is, at any rate, in his manner.* On the other hand, there are two early little plates—the three genii with a shield, and the three genii with the witch riding on a goat—which were clearly composed under Italian influence.† The bold attitudes of the children, and their plump forms and sharply defined limbs, directly recall Mantegna, similar drawings of children by whom Dürer may easily have seen on his travels. The angel in the Dresden altar-piece, the Cupid in the "Doctor's Dream," and the boy in "Jealousy," are all of the same type. The old Northern witch, riding through the air astride a black goat, with her face to its tail, is another example of what has been already said with regard to the four nude women by Wolgemut and Dürer, that such representations were current amongst artists at that day. Mythology, the ancient worship of the gods, and witchcraft, were very closely connected according to old German ideas.

All these remarkable circumstances combined admit of no other explanation than that Wolgemut and Dürer, after the return of the latter from his travels, were on very friendly terms, and worked together. Behind them stood their learned friends, Schedel and Pirkheimer. On the 23rd December, 1493, the *Weltchronik* was finished. Many of the views of towns in it, amongst others, the one of Rome, in spite of their want of accuracy, show traces of having been drawn from nature; but whether Wolgemut himself, or his stepson Pleydenwurff, travelled for the purpose of taking these sketches, or whether Hartmann Schedel supplied the materials for them, is not known. Thus, when Dürer returned home from Venice, in 1494, he found a soil already prepared to receive the wonders he had seen in distant lands, and many admirers among the circle of friends in

* Bartsch, 30. † Bartsch, 66 and 67.

the Unter der Vesten of the copies of Italian works of art, consisting chiefly of Mantegna's engravings, which he had brought with him. Michel Wolgemut derived ideas from them for those mythological engravings of his which clearly owed their origin to some learned advisers, while Dürer, on his part, strove to surpass in his copies the execution of his master.

Wolgemut certainly could get subjects from the antique and obtain a truer understanding of the nude through the anatomist and archæologist Hartmann Schedel; but his work was after all a mere dry piecemeal compilation of the productions of others. Dürer's creations on the other hand always show a rather laboured originality of invention. When he studied in his youth the works of other masters, he was indirectly carrying out the avowed intention of forming his hand and his eye. Mantegna was copied for his power of rendering expression and form, Wolgemut for his technical skill. The as yet unattained art of engraving had to be mastered; and the nude figures in Wolgemut's large plates, especially the female ones—the Amymone, the Dejanira, the Venus, whose loveliness first burst upon German art in the "Doctor's Dream," and the woman in the "Four Witches," where the female form is shown from all sides—were well fitted to arouse Dürer's emulation. From this point of view it is instructive to compare Dürer's copies with the small engravings which must be looked upon as his first original ones, done about the same time. Take, for instance, the "St. Sebastian,"* seen from the front, with a disproportionately long body and a large apocalyptic head, and the standing figure of the "Man of Sorrows,"† with raised hands, in which the exaggerated anatomy, the bad drawing of the head and eyes, and the feebleness shown in

* Bartsch, 56.

† Bartsch, 20.

the use of the burin, are so striking that we are tempted to put the work before the year 1497, and to look upon the monogram in the corner as of later insertion.

Dürer, however, had succeeded in obtaining a knowledge of the male form much earlier than of the female. This was owing not merely to any ignorance of the human organism, but to the want of opportunities for observation caused by the customs of the time, which appear to have made the free study of female models very difficult for the young Nuremberger. The tradition that the most honourable women and girls sat to him is not old enough, and, even if true, can only refer to the later years of the master, when he was already famous.* His earliest study from the nude female figure occurs probably in the engraving originally called "Genovefa," but now more correctly known as "The Penance of St. John Chrysostom,"† a subject also chosen by other masters, such as Lucas Cranach and Barthel Beham, because of the opportunity it afforded for representing a nude woman. The aged penitent only appears quite small in the landscape background, creeping on all fours, while the woman he had seduced sits in the foreground in a cave, suckling her child. What difficulties the artist experienced in doing this figure can be clearly seen even in the finished engraving. We can note the cutting away of a piece of the rock on which she is sitting; the evident shortening of the figure, as revealed by the existence, above the head, of the original outline, and of the parting of the hair, which has been turned into a hollow in the rock; and we can even make out the old contour of the shoulder and the top of the

* Manlius, *Locorum communium collectio*, Basileæ, 1563, ii. 173; reprinted in Strobel's *Miscellaneen liter.* vi. 212. "Apelles cum Venerem depingeret, curavit sibi triginta pulcherrimas virgines eligi, quas intueretur. Similiter fecit Durerus honestus vir, pictor Norimbergensis, cui gratificatæ sunt honestissimæ matronæ, virgines."

† Bartsch, 63.

arm, though the correction is meant to be hidden by the deep shading. These signs of uncertainty in drawing the human form, which appear to be, in some degree, owing to Venetian influences, are worth noticing because they form rare exceptions to his later method.

There is another puzzling drawing, dated 1501, in the Albertina, of a naked female figure, in a half reclining attitude, supporting the upper part of her body on her elbow. It is delicately drawn with the pen and brush on a green ground, and heightened with white. Above it is the inscription, in Dürer's handwriting, "*Daz hab' ich gfisyrt,*" with the date and monogram. The very statement, so expressly made, that this figure was "*gfisyrt*" (*gevisieret*), "drawn from nature," favours the supposition that he did not often make studies of this kind; while the whole appearance of the sketch shows that, with all his care, he had great difficulty in drawing this tolerably well-rendered female form, that part of it especially where the trunk and the haunches join having proved very hard to satisfactorily accomplish. The posè of the figure and the long delicate profile recall the Dejanira and Amymone; but the rendering of the forms, in all their separate detail, is quite different. Dürer is content with nature as she appears to him, and there is no trace in his work of the later conventional idea of beauty borrowed from antique art. The systematic proportion, and the laboured elegance which, in the mythological figures, predominate over the study of nature, and are evidently taken from foreign sources, in fact all the characteristic and to us pleasing features of these large engravings, seem to belong of right to Wolgemut.

But Dürer, after he had gained freedom of hand, and had quite emancipated himself from the guidance of his old master, quickly found the way to perfection. He possessed, as no other did before him, the power of absorbing nature

into himself, and he followed all her footsteps with the joy of a discoverer. Not misled by cold definite rules of proportion, he gave himself up to unrestrained realism in the representation of the female form. Following the models which, as a rule, Nuremberg supplied him with, he chose as his type a rounded head, arched back, and muscular lower limbs powerfully developed. The earliest representation of this kind of female form is a Venus, sitting astride a fantastic bridled dolphin, and holding up a cornucopia, on which is a small blindfolded Cupid shooting an arrow. The round cheerful eyes and the hair gathered into a knot recall the model whom Dürer thought worthy to represent the Goddess of Beauty. Great care and delicacy are shown in the use of the pen in this drawing, which is in the Albertina, and bears the date 1503. To a few years earlier must be assigned a very rare little outlined engraving of a woman in profile, standing on a small ball, and holding a thistle like an eryngo, called "The Little Fortune."* The scarf round her head and the long staff in her hand show that the figure was done from the living model. It seems as if Dürer were here making a slight attempt to see how far he could adapt engraving to his new ideas of nature before he undertook the larger rendering of the same subject in his "Nemesis," usually called the "Great Fortune."† The winged Goddess of Justice and Retribution stands smiling on a globe, carrying in one hand a bridle and curb for the too presumptuous fortunate ones, in the other a goblet for unappreciated worth. Embodied in this powerful female form the northern worship of nature

* Bartsch, 78.

† Bartsch, 77. A reversed study for the engraving, with the outlines of the figure and one of the wings, which is more folded, extremely carefully drawn with the pen, is in the British Museum.

here makes its first conscious and triumphant appearance in the history of art. Everything that, according to our æsthetic formalism based on the antique, we should consider beautiful is sacrificed to truth; and yet our taste must bow before the imperishable fidelity to nature displayed in these forms, the fullness of life that animates these limbs. The Nemesis to a certain degree marks the extreme point reached by Dürer in his unbiassed study of the nude. His further progress became more and more influenced by his researches into the proportions of the human body.

Concerning the deeper meaning and direct motive of this representation of the Nemesis I have formed an opinion, which, even if erroneous, is worth stating, for it will afford us a significant outlook upon the historical events which formed the background to Dürer's labours. Under the edge of the cloud, above which the Nemesis floats to the right, Dürer has depicted a landscape. Between two steep rocky precipices, at the junction of two waterfalls, stands a village, encircling a little Gothic church—evidently no fancy picture, but a real sketch from nature, pointing to a particular place. In Sandrart's time it was supposed to be Eytas, near Groswardein, the birthplace of Dürer's father; but, apart from the difficulty of tracing this view into Dürer's possession, the character and situation of the place have nothing in common with the sandy plains of Hungary. It is, rather, a mountainous country, a rocky ravine, in fact, which we have before our eyes; and the locality is evidently in some way connected with the idea embodied in the Nemesis floating in the clouds. What this connection is, a memorable episode in the history of Nuremberg may help to throw some light on.

During the unhappy Swiss war of Maximilian I., in 1499, Nuremberg was foremost amongst the states in complying with the Emperor's demand for troops. The loyal Imperial

city furnished 400 foot-soldiers and 60 horse in brilliant red uniforms, the use of which was introduced about that time, besides six field pieces. At the head of this troop was the young Wilibald Pirkheimer, who, on his return from his studies in Italy, had devoted himself to the service of his native town, and, after marrying Crescentia Rieter on the 13th of October, 1495, had been elected into the Council. Though he had sacrificed the warlike inclinations of his earlier days to study, he now had an opportunity of exchanging law books and ancient classics for the sword, and, notwithstanding the disastrous issue of the war, of gaining the lasting favour of the Emperor, as well as the title of Imperial Councillor. A consciousness of power, combined with a thirst for heroic deeds and military fame, was just springing up in his flourishing native town. Warlike games began to be in favour, and opportunities of serious fighting were eagerly embraced, even when it was not a question of the repulse of insolent aggression. Besides the valiant burghers, who still regarded mounted service as specially honourable, the Council maintained many goodly companies of hired foot-soldiers; and so highly were these esteemed, that a prosperous citizen felt no hesitation in giving his daughter in marriage to one of them; nor was the drinking-room where the patricians were wont to assemble shut against them. It was there that a certain Zamesser made himself so conspicuous by his quarrels that Dürer in one of his letters from Venice ironically calls him the "meek one." And he also in the same letter cites a somewhat strong expression used by Peter Weisweber, who, like another Nuremberg burgher and brass-beater, Konz Kamerer, commanded a company of the town foot-soldiery in the war of 1504.* Amongst people of this stamp there must have

* Lochner, *Personennamen*, pp. 38, 41.

been many an original and attractive figure; and their picturesque dress, their bold carriage, and their rollicking behaviour in the streets, all contributed to make them very favourite subjects for the painter, once art had turned its attention to the things of everyday life. By Dürer they were studied most diligently, and were afterwards introduced by him freely into his representations of the Passion.

One of the earliest examples of these studies is the large coloured pen sketch in the Albertina of a horseman, dated 1498. The drawing of the horse is rather imperfect, and in many ways corresponds with that in the St. Eustace engraving, for which it appears to have served as a study. When Dürer afterwards introduced the figure and armour of this horseman into the famous plate of 1513, called "The Knight, Death, and the Devil," he wrote on the carefully-executed work the words, "This is the armour worn at the period in Germany." It was also at this time that he engraved the group of five foot-soldiers and a Turk,* which, though rather meagre and sharp in execution, is so excellent in drawing, that we can scarcely believe it to be wholly Dürer's: while the action is so carefully studied and so dramatic, and the composition so harmonious, that we are reminded rather of Wolgemut or some other master of his school. The unsigned engraving representing a group of three foot-soldiers with banner and halberds, in the Hartmann Schedel collection of manuscripts at Munich,† to which reference has frequently been made, must also be attributed to an inferior artist of the same school. It resembles in its thin, dry style the work of the master M. Z., and that of Dürer at an early period; and it appears to be by the same hand as the plate of two similar foot-soldiers

* Bartsch, 88.

† *Codex Lat.* 716, fol. 328.

in conversation, signed with the monogram P. W.* The "Standard-bearer,"† in which the action is somewhat violent, is evidently an early original work of Dürer's—the St. Andrew's Cross of the Golden Fleece on the standard, which belonged to Maximilian I. as Duke of Burgundy, pointing without doubt to the war of 1499. Another engraving of the same date is the small "St. George on foot before the vanquished dragon,"‡ in which the knightly armour of the saint, and the Burgundian helmet at his feet are executed with the most loving care.

The campaign in Switzerland was well calculated to foster the self-importance of the Nuremberg citizens. Both in the admirable smartness of their appointments, and in having so cultivated a leader, they formed a favourable contrast to the rest of the auxiliary troops, to whom, more especially the ill-famed Swabians, the originators of the war, the failure of the campaign was attributed. Of the glorious nature of their own share in it the Nurembergers never for a moment felt any doubt; the actual importance of historical facts being often estimated, not according to their practical results, but by their indirect and fancied influence upon other events. And so Pirkheimer probably felt himself obliged, like Xenophon and Cæsar, to give us in his flowing Latin an account of his campaign, which is a masterpiece of contemporary history.§ By this work, which touched upon a time and places so full of interest, art, as well as learning, was the gainer, for there appeared almost immediately in Nuremberg three enormous sheets, each composed of two plates put together, on which the whole course of the Swiss war is depicted, with the

* Bartsch, *P.-gr.* vi. 310, No. 3.
† Bartsch, 87.
‡ Bartsch, 53.
§ Wilib. Pirkheimer, *Bellum Helveticum.* (*Opera* ed. Goldast, and Freher's *Scriptores rerum Germanicarum*, iii. 66 et seq.).

title in German, "*Diess ist der Krieg zwischen dem Römischen König und den Schweitzern und die ganze Landschaft: Städte, Schlösser und Dörfer im Schweitzerland.*"* Passavant's supposition † that the work was of Swiss origin is unfounded, and is confuted not only by the fact that Maximilian is designated in the Latin title as '*Regia Maiestas*,' and by the dialect of the German inscriptions, but finally and chiefly by the style and technique of the engravings, which belong without doubt to the Nuremberg school; indeed, the monogram on one of the plates, in spite of an insertion which is unintelligible, can hardly be other than the P. W. familiar to us elsewhere.

The peculiar connection already alluded to that existed between Wolgemut and the Pleydenwurff family strongly inclines me to the idea that possibly these plates, which are known to have been executed in Nuremberg, and which are marked with the monogram P. W. or a similar one, might be traced to the Pleydenwurff-Wolgemut studio; ‡ and if the conviction I have already expressed of Wolgemut having been an engraver finds confirmation and acceptance, there is much to be said for such a supposition. An example of two names thus combined may be seen in an engraving of three figures, one of whom is St. Anne, by Wolgemut's pupil or associate, Mair von Landshut, which has a W on either side of "Mair 1499," showing that it was executed, or at any rate published and sold conjointly.§ Wilhelm Pleydenwurff, it is true, was no longer living at that date; but his family, as we have seen, still remained under Wolgemut's care; and it is possible, moreover, that a

* "This represents the war between the King of the Romans and the Swiss, and the whole theatre of the campaign, with the towns, castles, and villages of Switzerland."

† *Peintre-graveur*, ii. p. 160.

‡ J. F. Christ in the *Anzeige der Monogrammatum*, Leipzig, 1747, p. 345, and the *Dictionnaire des Monogrammes*, Paris, 1762, p. 255, already conjectured that the P. W. was Pleydenwurff's monogram.

§ Bartsch, *P.-gr.* vi. 361, No. 8.

brother or some other relation had entered into a connection with Wolgemut similar to Wilhelm's. Passing over, however, these minor questions, let us examine more attentively the illustrated chronicle itself.

On the sheets, the height of which exceeds their breadth, mountains and valleys rise one above another in the old-fashioned style on a gradually diminishing scale, so that there is space only in the extreme foreground for the large and admirably-drawn groups of people on foot and horseback, one of which strongly recalls the five foot-soldiers in the plate by Dürer mentioned above.* Farther back appear the figures of the combatants, generally too large in proportion to the buildings, which are sketched like those in Schedel's Chronicle. Imperfect as these views may be, and more like old maps than anything else, they still exhibit a knowledge of the country which could certainly not have been acquired by mere hearsay, but must have been the result of a personal acquaintance with it. Hence, no doubt, the reason why Passavant suggested a Swiss artist. And though the idea must be rejected, it may at any rate serve to remind us that there were many Swiss painters, such as Urse Graf and Manuel Deutsch, who showed a passionate fondness for military life, and that it is therefore by no means improbable that so artistic a town as Nuremberg should have numbered among its soldiers, taken as they were from every branch of industry, painters and draughtsmen sufficiently skilled to reproduce certain scenes and incidents of the campaign, even though in a primitive fashion. It would indeed be very difficult to explain the appearance at Nuremberg in 1499 of this illustrated war chronicle in any other way.

Once, however, admit this, and a step more brings us

* Bartsch, 88.

to the tempting hypothesis that the sketch for the strangely conceived landscape in the Nemesis is due to the same source, and that some spot disastrous to the emperor or to the Nurembergers specially during the war is here portrayed—possibly the site of the source of the Adige in the Tyrol, of which the legend attached to the engraving says, "Many people were slain on the moorland near Mals," and where, according to Pirkheimer, one thousand dead were left unburied.* In that case Dürer's Nemesis would turn out to be a memorial of the unhappy Swiss war, just as Rembrandt's etching in 1633, of Evil Fortune under the guise of a naked woman sailing in a ship, had reference to the battle of Actium.† And, to complete the argument, the goblet which Nemesis holds in her right hand, apart from its allegorical meaning, could be no other than the golden cup presented, together with a public vote of thanks, to Pirkheimer by the Council of Nuremberg on his return from the war.

Even should this attempted explanation not hold good, its introduction here is not without use, since it rests on historical documents which help us to become better ac-

* Some years after writing the above, I found amongst the remains of A. von Zahn, a note to the effect that the landscape in the "Great Fortune" was a representation of Haigerloch in Swabia, a good German mile to the west of Hechingen in Hohenzollern. And it is true that even at the present day there is a striking resemblance between the situation of that town in the cleft of a ravine and Dürer's landscape. (Compare the steel engraving in G. Schwab's *Das malerische und romantische Deutschland*, Leipzig, 1846, i. 111–114.) Zahn's idea of a Swabian landscape was arrived at from quite another source, and is only alluded to here in order to give him due credit for the fact. Nor, indeed, am I indisposed to agree with him. The Nuremberg flag may very possibly have passed through Haigerloch. The town lies on the Eyach, into which a waterfall empties itself a little higher up. Is it possible that some mistake in substituting the name of the river Eyach for the village Eytas led Sandrart astray?

† Bartsch, *Catalogue des Estampes de Rembrandt*, Vienna, 1797, No. 111. Chas. Blanc, *l'Œuvre de Rembrandt*, No. 81.

quainted with Dürer himself. At any rate we may accept the fact that shortly before the close of the fifteenth century there was to be found in a German army, led by a burgher learned in the language and thought of ancient Hellas, at least one artist with ready eye, mind, and hand. It will not do indeed to compare the pictures which he brought home of all that he had seen, done, and suffered, with the account handed down to us by the scholar in his book, but the two works belong to each other, the one appealing to the few cultivated persons of the day, the other by illustration and description to the general public; and who is to decide which had the greater influence on his age, or was of the most service to it? Now, it is true, the draughtsman is forgotten, his work almost unknown, whilst Pirkheimer's commentary, aglow with a new world of thought and feeling, will always maintain its classical worth. What noble words, for instance, he has put into the mouth of the Swiss maiden, who came proudly to offer terms of peace! They sound like a glorification of the hostile commonwealth, of its customs and its freedom. And then, again, how bitter he becomes against these same Swiss at the close of his history, where he speaks of the mercenary people who sold themselves to the French, "to the eternal disgrace of the whole German nation!"

Another episode in his narrative forcibly illustrates the humanitarian side of Pirkheimer's character. During the devastating expedition through the Engadine he was dispatched by the Emperor with a foraging party of 200 men over the Stilvio Pass to Worms or Bormio. On the way they came to a large village destroyed by fire, and at its entrance were met by two old women driving 400 children, boys and girls, like a flock before them. So pale, weak, and emaciated were they that their aspect awoke the utmost horror. On Pirkheimer asking the old women whither they were conduct-

ing this miserable band, they answered, though hardly able to speak from grief and feebleness, that he would soon see, and thereupon proceeded to a meadow, where all, big and little, immediately threw themselves upon the ground, and began tearing up and eagerly devouring the herbs. At this pitiful sight Pirkheimer was quite stunned, and burst into tears. The old women then told him how the fathers of these unhappy children had fallen in the war, how their mothers had either perished from misery and privation or been driven away, how their dwellings had been burnt, and how they themselves were forsaken by all the world. Their number, they added, had been much greater, but hunger and death had diminished it, and they could only hope that their turn would soon come. The scholar, meantime, remarked that the children seemed to prefer the more acid herbs, and were able to recognise them at a glance.

Often, since the world was first visited by the horrors of war, has mankind had to suffer unspeakable misery such as this, but no one hitherto in the stern old days had thought it worth while to bestow much attention or sympathy upon its sufferings. Here, however, in this German commander, moved even to tears under the influence of the feeling the poet has expressed in these noble words, "*Der Menschheit ganzer Jammer fasst mich an*"—"The woe of all mankind possesses me," we have a proof that the times have changed, that men have become more humane, and that they have learnt to know what sympathy is, and to feel it, not only for their own countrymen, but for the whole human race. It is sentiments like these, revealing, as they do, the spirit of humanity freeing itself from the trammels of the middle ages, and finding in the contemplation of nature and of mankind a new meaning and new forms of expression, that mark out both Pirkheimer and Dürer as citizens of a better age—as, indeed, belonging to modern times.

CHAPTER IX.

THE APOCALYPSE AND THE EARLY WOODCUTS.

"O Lord, give us then the new and beautiful Jerusalem, which comes down from heaven, and of which the Apocalypse speaks."—Dürer.



ONLY by following out the deep-seated contrast between the two men, and by observing how very differently they were affected by the signs of the approaching times, can we understand the full force of the question whether in this instance we have to do with Dürer or with Wolgemut? At the close of the fifteenth century men's minds in Germany were profoundly agitated. The national feeling, so often crushed, asserted itself with unexpected force against the old hierarchical system which culminated in the Papacy and the Roman Empire. Just at this time a change took place in the heads of these two centres of the principles of the middle ages, which was well calculated on the one hand to awaken new hopes in the slumbering opposition, and on the other to excite it to despair. In the year 1492 the profligate Alexander VI., of the Spanish family of the Borgias, ascended the Papal throne; and in the following year a young, high-minded, chivalrous, and cultivated sovereign, Maximilian I., became

the representative of Germany at the head of the Roman Empire. What feelings, what expectations must have taken possession of all good and thoughtful men! At once, without delay, all the states and princes crowded round their new suzerain, eager for the consolidation of an enduring peace, and the re-establishment of an Imperial constitution. The first and most powerful obstacle to these efforts was the enormous traditional influence of the Pope upon the public affairs of Germany; and when it was proposed in 1495 to establish an Imperial Diet (*Reichsrath*), the duty of that assembly to take into consideration the complaints of the nation against the Roman See was immediately asserted. And how did the Pope reply to this? In the year 1496 he denounced the reading and dissemination of heretical writings, and enjoined the printers, under threat of excommunication, to print no book until it had been submitted to the bishop of the diocese and had received his sanction. And when the newly-established Imperial Government sent an embassy to the Pope with an earnest request for the redress of grievances and illegal proceedings, Alexander VI. issued the Bull of 1501, by which the ecclesiastical censorship of books was formally introduced into Germany.*

The Papacy had justly recognised in German literature, especially in its eager determination to attain publicity, the motive power of the opposition to its own supremacy; but it endeavoured in vain to obstruct the source and stem the flow of the deep current of reform. The new life streamed through a thousand channels, and soon seized upon a fresh field, which even the enlightened Popes of those days had failed to observe, much less had viewed with distrust—the field of German art. While the Papacy adorned the seat of

* Ranke, *Deutsche Geschichte im Zeitalter der Reformation.* Friedrich Sachse, *Die Anfänge der Büchercensur in Deutschland.* Leipzig, 1870.

power with the choicest treasures of the Renaissance, and the rich maturity of Italian art, formed upon an antique ideal, was subservient to its commands, the unsightly woodcuts and copper engravings of Germany attacked and undermined its exalted position; appealing as they did everywhere, even in the public streets, to the hearts of hundreds of thousands, and especially to those poor ignorant minds to whom writings and books were as yet sealed treasures.

At the head of those who thus declared open war stands Michel Wolgemut. In January, 1496, he issued a small engraving, containing a scandalous caricature of the Papal See. It bears the inscription, in bold Renaissance characters, "ROMA CAPUT MUNDI." In the background on the left is the castle of St. Angelo, surmounted by a flag adorned with St. Peter's keys, and on the right the mediæval Torre di Nona, which to this day gives its name to the Via di Tordinona; between the two flows the Tiber.* In the middle stands a female monster with a body covered with what are more like scales than hair, and having one leg ending in a goat's hoof and the other in a vulture's claw. Her left hand is held ready to clutch, while in the place of the right appears a cat's paw. On the hind-quarters of the figure rests an ugly mask, from below which protrudes a long tail, ending in a forked-tongued dragon's head. Between the shoulders is the head of an ass, whence the engraving was afterwards called "*Papstesel*"—"Pope's Ass". Near the monster appears an object worth notice, an antique vessel, shaped like an amphora. The buildings are quite

* Passavant, *Peintre-graveur*, II. p. 135, No. 71. The remaining inscriptions run thus: above, CASTEL S. AGNO—TORE DI NONA—TEVERE; below, on the left, the date, IANVARII 1496; in the middle the monogram W. The initial letter at the beginning of this Chapter contains a reduced copy of this exceedingly rare engraving.

simply treated, in the same style as those in Schedel's Chronicle.*

What a flood of sharp, biting satire there is in this engraving! And yet Wolgemut dared to affix to it his monogram—the mark that showed it issued from his studio; a piece of audacity nowhere possible in the year 1496, except under the mild and liberal government of the patricians of Nuremberg. We feel at once that this is an indirect product of the cultured enlightenment which found such renowned champions amongst the chief citizens of the free Imperial town. Every circumstance indeed points to its having originated in the literary circle which had just started the publication of the *Weltchronik*, and of which one of the most active members was the learned burgher Peter Dannhauser, called Petrus Danusius, or Abietiscola, by his friend Conrad Celtes, who two or three years before had written the *Archetypus triumphantis Romæ*, and dedicated it to his patron Sebald Schreyer. Wolgemut's plate appears to be a sort of grotesque caricature of this work on ancient Rome. Perhaps the pious Carthusian Prior George Pirkheimer was not far wrong when he said of Dannhauser that the study of heathenish books and poets had alienated him from the true faith; a reproach against which Dannhauser thought it necessary to defend himself in a special apology.†

But Wolgemut's satirical engraving, besides being the unmistakable result of an advancing enlightenment, had a popular Scriptural foundation. The idea of representing "Rome the head of the world" as a female monster reminds one involuntarily of the "great Babylon" to which it was so often compared at that time, and the origin of which is

* The same ass's head appears in one of the plates in that work representing the metamorphosis of one of Ulysses' companions by Circe, although the text in no way requires it.

† K. Hagen, *Deutschlands liter. und relig. Verhältnisse*, i. 185.

found in the words at the end of the seventeenth chapter of the Apocalypse, "And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth." Whenever the public mind has been at a loss to understand the existing state of things in religious matters, it has always turned eagerly to that mysterious book which also owed its origin to a similar feeling of deep discontentment—the Revelation of St. John, "which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass." But the Apocalypse, itself a book of seven seals, could give no answer, no earthly consolation to the troubled inquirer. Throughout its pages breathes a supernatural spirit of destruction, and its terrors could only serve to feed the maginations of those who had lost all hope. At the same time the triumphs which it shadowed forth of a moral power superior to all the powers of the earth had in it something calculated to purify and elevate the spirit of the oppressed; and men's minds by continually dwelling on the thought of the Last Judgment gradually became less absorbed in the petty cares of daily life, and consequently more ripe for an intellectual revolution. A preference for Apocalyptic subjects had already manifested itself in early Christian art; as, for example, in the works of the old Prague masters during the troubled period that preceded the outbreak of the Hussite movement, of which some remarkable remains have been preserved to us in the Castle of Karlstein. The fact that perhaps the oldest German block-book ever printed was one of the Revelation of St. John, and the special attention given to the illustrations of this subject in the Cologne and Koburger Bibles, are further examples of this preference. And now as the fifteenth century, which had witnessed strength wasted and endeavours thrown away in a vain struggle to improve the condition of public affairs, drew towards its close, and the oppressive air which betokens the coming storm

gathered anew over men's minds, the Apocalypse once more occupied the front rank amongst the artist's choice of subjects.

At the very time that Wolgemut published his squib upon erring Rome, the young Dürer was working in a neighbouring house at his Revelation of St. John. In the previous year (1495) he had sketched the figure of the Babylonish whore for the last page but one of his series of woodcuts. The washed pen and crayon drawing in the Albertina, which is the earliest study that I have met with for any of Dürer's known works,* merely shows us the standing figure of a lady of the time in a very low-cut dress of rich brocade, laden with ornaments and trimming, and holding up her outer robe in her right hand; in the background is a sketch of the same model seen from behind. But in the woodcut this same voluptuous woman, with curls hanging down her cheeks, is represented reversed, sitting upon the seven-headed beast —typical of the seven hills of Rome—and holding aloft in her right hand an embossed gold cup, "full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication."† In front of her stand a group, who manifest little reverence for her appearance. One of them, a king, is pointing to her, while appearing to converse with the others, among whom is a stout peasant with his felt hat over one ear, who seems to regard her with some horror, while a soldier and a woman are looking askant at her and smiling. In the middle of the group is a man in a short coat, with long sleeves, and wearing a cap the pointed end of which hangs over the back of his head: he stands in a resolute attitude, with one hand resting upon his hip, and his eyes fixed upon the monster in a

* This drawing is copied in facsimile in the *Trachtenbilder aus der Albertina*, Vienna, 1871. It has been etched in the reverse sense, by C. Favart, 1818.

† Rev. xvii. 4.

dark scrutinising gaze. Whether intended for a man of letters, an artist, or an artisan, this figure represents the extreme free-thinker of the age, and forms a direct contrast to the monk near him in the extreme foreground, who, with pious demeanour, thin sharp lips, and widely-opened eyes, alone prostrates himself in adoration before the crowned woman. In the sky above already hovers the angel of the 18th chapter pointing to the burning city on the waters, and crying to the group of men beneath, "mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils," &c.* And the other angel sweeps downward with the millstone, to cast it into the sea, saying, "Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all." † On the left the heavens are opened, and the "Word of God" rides forth accoutred for war on a white horse, and after him the hosts of heaven,‡ about at length to found the new Jerusalem. There is but one explanation of this powerful picture. When Dürer drew the woman upon the seven-headed beast, and the "great city that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls,"§ he was not thinking like the writer of the Revelation of the old city upon the seven hills, but of the papal Rome of his own days. And, this being the case, it is easy to understand that the Apocalyptic text would have all the ring of a revolutionary hymn, and that Dürer's illustrations of it would at that time flash like lightning in a storm upon the minds of men:—"Reward her even as she rewarded you and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double." ‖

* Rev. xviii. 2.
Rev. xviii. 21.
‡ Rev. xix. 11, et seq.
§ Rev. xviii. 16.
‖ Rev. xviii. 6.

Dürer appears to have been thinking over the plan for his Apocalypse even while on his travels in foreign countries, where, especially in Italy, he may have observed, as Luther did at Rome, much that roused in him a feeling of antagonism. Soon after his return home we find him busied with preparatory studies for this work; and in the year 1498 an edition in German and Latin, under the respective titles of "*Die heimliche Offenbarung Johannis*," and "*Apocalipsis cum figuris*," printed in Gothic characters, and adorned with fifteen large woodcuts, made its appearance.* The first cut, which serves as an introduction, and as a sort of earnest of the rest, represents the martyrdom of St. John the Evangelist in the presence of the Emperor Domitian and a motley group of spectators. The subject was familiar from a woodcut in Koburger's Bible of 1483, and had thus attracted the artist's attention. The arrangement of the Emperor's throne recalls similar representations in the *Schatzbehalter*; and the study for the head of the Emperor we have already recognised in an early drawing in the Florentine Cabinet.† The building visible behind the brocade on the back of the throne, intended probably for the palace of the heathen Emperor, is remarkable as being a solitary but distinct example of Renaissance architecture.

The second cut, which represents the calling of St. John,‡ is effective in the simplicity of the two figures, standing by themselves, surrounded only by the clouds and the seven candlesticks; though the bearded figure of the Saviour

* Very few copies, in the form of a book, have been preserved. The text of the German edition, together with the preface, is borrowed from Koburger's Bible, and closes with these words: "Here ends the book of the mysterious Revelation of Saint John the apostle and evangelist. Printed at Nuremberg by Albert Dürer, painter, in the year MCCCC XCVIII after Christ's birth."

† See above, p. 113.

‡ Rev. i. 10, et seq.

rather suffers from the too literal rendering of the eyes "as a flame of fire," and of the "sharp two-edged sword" which went "out of his mouth."* But its great feature is the drapery, which Dürer always, on principle, looked to as one of the chief means of artistic expression. Though he has not made his St. John, as the Bible describes him, in accordance with the custom of Eastern and Southern nations, fall "as dead" before the Lord, but has merely represented him bending forward on his knees, the intention of depicting the attitude as the result of a sudden movement is shown, not only by the hair hanging over his brows, but by the way in which the cloak falls in large folds on the ground; and it is the vivid conception of this movement that produces that apparently accidental arrangement of the drapery which gives life to the form, even while completely concealing it. A mere glance at this St. John is enough to show how he is holding his breath to listen, and how his heart beats with anxiety; and in the same way the right hand of Jesus, which holds the seven stars, derives its appearance of strength entirely from the way in which the energy of the grasp is reflected in the folds of the wide sleeve. The Gothic volutes upon the seven colossal candlesticks are largely mingled with naturalistic twigs and leafage, and at the same time show, especially on the extreme left, in their ornamented stems and general outline the forms of the new style.

On the third cut,† we see above, the gates of heaven opened, and the throne of God set in the midst, surrounded by the full lustre of a rainbow "like unto an emerald"; upon the lap of him that sits thereon lies the book with the seven seals, which the Lamb is to open; round about the throne, with crowns and harps, are the four-and-twenty

* Rev. i. 14, 16. † Rev. iv. and v.

elders, one of whom encourages the trembling St. John. The beasts full of eyes did not lend themselves to any kind of satisfactory representation, and yet could not be left out of the composition, and so Dürer has made them as small and as little conspicuous as possible. The shape of the seven lamps over the throne of God, and the construction of the double seats of the twenty-four elders, are borrowed exactly from church furniture then in use. In charming contrast to the flaming glories of heaven above, an enchanting view is seen below of the shores of a lake, with trees, mountains, castles and towers; a picture of the peace that reigns where man is not, and human suffering is unknown.

The sequel of the opening of the first four seals* is shown in the next cut under the form of the four Apocalyptic horsemen. For simple grandeur this justly famous design has never been surpassed. Its composition has more of a plastic than a pictorial character, and is all arranged as it were on the surface, like a low-relief, without any background; so much so, indeed, that the margin cuts off part of the head of the foremost horse, and of the tail of the last one. But it is just this double limitation of the space which proves so uncommonly effective, for it concentrates the attention upon the headlong course from left to right, and makes it look swift and unending. Besides this, there is a vivid impression produced upon the spectator of the impetuosity of the rush forward, an impression which Dürer heightens in a masterly manner, by only showing the fore part of all the horses dashing onwards, and concealing the hind legs as likely by their action to produce an opposite effect. The general details of the composition are neither attractive nor particularly successful; but, in spite of this, the fine and noble thoughts on which the conception is based give these

* Rev. vi. 1–8.

Apocalyptic horsemen an unqualified claim to the highest rank, and have always secured them universal admiration. It is the earliest creation of the master to which we can ascribe an absolute value.

In the presence of such profound inventive genius, the accessories of the subject and certain weak points of detail are of only secondary consideration. The horses of the three chief riders exhibit the ugly and inaccurate forms which Dürer only abandoned after engraving the St. Eustace; though at the same time it must be allowed that the rams' noses and human eyes help to give them a demoniacal expression. The riders themselves, looking angrily forward, one drawing a bow, another brandishing a sword, and the third swinging a pair of scales behind him, are accoutred in the fantastic costume of the day. The fourth horseman, whose legs nearly touch the ground, and whose worn-out jade limps haltingly along, is Death, brandishing the infernal trident, and represented, not as a skeleton, but as a withered old man, with staring eyelidless eyes, something like the wild savage ravishing a woman in the engraving already described.* Behind him follows Hell, under the form of a gigantic dragon, about to engulf within its yawning mouth an earthly crowned head. The group on the right, over whom the storm is raging, represent the "fourth part of the earth," which is to be slain. It includes the various classes of society of that day: a Nuremberg housewife, a fat merchant, a shrieking peasant, a frightened burgher, and, in the extreme right-hand corner, a tonsured head.

None of the other cuts exhibit so much unity of design, chiefly owing to the anxiety to compress several stories into one composition, which Dürer continually displays, and

* P. 205.

which easily leads him into allowing his subject and its meaning to rank before any considerations of artistic completeness. Thus the breaking of the fifth and sixth seals * is represented in one cut, the fifth; the upper part above the clouds being devoted to the distribution of the white robes to the martyrs for the faith, while the darkening of the sun and moon, and the fall of the stars, are shown below. The comforting of the poor souls of those who "were slain for the word of God," and the clothing of their nakedness by the angels at the altar of God, is an exceedingly touching scene. Dürer refers afterwards, in 1521, to this same passage in the Apocalypse, when he speaks of the "innocent blood shed by the Pope, the priests, and the monks; these are the slain, that cry aloud for vengeance at the foot of the altar of God, to whom the voice of God replies: Wait until the number of the slaughtered innocent ones be fulfilled, then will I judge."†

But that a similar application of the passage to the state of things in the Church of his day had already come home to Dürer in the last decade of the 15th century, is evinced by the lower half of the composition, wherein is displayed the judgment of God, in the great day of His wrath. For amongst those who "hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb,"‡ we see on the right, beside the Emperor and Empress, a wailing pope, a dismayed cardinal, a bishop, and a cowled monk; while amid the group on the left, which represents the destruction of the nations, a woman seated near her child, angrily raises herself and cries out with wide-opened

* Rev. vi. 9–17.

† *The Netherlands Journal.* Campe, *Reliquien*, p. 132. *Dürers Briefe*, 123.

‡ Rev. vi. 15, 16.

mouth against the fallen hierarchy. It was a profound inspiration which made Dürer place the curses of the people in a mother's mouth.

The sixth cut also comprises two subjects, the only connection between which is one of time and thought: viz., the four angels who hold the winds, and the sealing of the 144,000 saints.* But in this instance the two groups are disposed, not one above the other, but side by side. The space to the left is occupied by the four angels, two of whom, standing in the foreground, form the most important part of the picture. In opposition to the conventional idea, Dürer represents these destroying angels as aged and gaunt, though beardless men, and thus at once distinguishes them from the childish and feminine forms usually given to the heavenly messengers of good tidings, but which could not here have been made to harmonise with the performance of the final task of vengeance, without artistic exaggeration and untruthfulness. The idea of giving so distinctive and masculine a character to these menacing angels, is therefore an exceedingly happy one. The aspect of their tall, gaunt, bony figures, with gigantic vultures' wings, is sufficiently suggestive of their fearful mission, without there being any need to see them engaged upon it. Standing unmoved in their long sweeping garments, resting one hand on their swords, while they merely cast a look at the blowing winds and check them with a slight gesture of the other hand, these two angels appear incomparably more powerful in their attitude of passive resistance than the third angel behind them, who is crying out and brandishing his sword against one of the winds. As a sign of their power, an apple tree, laden with fruit, stands close beside them, unhurt by the blasts. In the sky, the angel who brings the order to hold

* Rev. vii. 1–4.

back the winds is carrying "the seal of the living God," in the form of the cross;* and another, a lovely messenger of peace, is sealing on their foreheads the kneeling figures to the right, several of whom appear to be portraits.

The seventh cut illustrates the distribution of the trumpets to the seven angels, and the plagues caused by the first five of them.† The only part of it that possesses a certain charm is the group of youthful angels, floating around the throne of God; all the rest is unintelligible. The effects of the sixth trumpet—the unloosing of the four angels, who lay bound in the great river Euphrates, and who are now released to slay the third part of men‡—in the following cut appear however more suitable for representation. From under the golden altar, from the four horns of which came the voice, sweeps forth through the clouds the little band of armed warriors, mounted upon lion-headed horses vomiting fire. On the earth below, the four destroying angels discharge their horrible office. Previously we saw them in repose, but here they appear in wild movement. As each one brandishes his sword and falls upon his victim with equal fury, one seizing a woman by her hair, and another striking down horse and rider, they look like demons born of a ferocious lust of destruction. The foremost of them has just seized by the shoulder the terrified pope as he lies on the ground, while the bishop behind him is already killed, and the Emperor in vain lays hold of his tottering crown. It is clear that the angels only have the right to live, and before their strokes all else falls and becomes a shapeless mass of fragments.

Next to the four horsemen of the fourth cut, the angels of the Euphrates are the most powerful conception in Dürer's

* Rev. vii. 2, 3. † Rev. viii.; and ix. 1–12.

‡ Rev. xi. 13, *et seq.*

Apocalypse. In these twin designs the long-restrained pathos of old German art breaks out for the first time in irresistible force, without overpassing the limits of artistic expression. The inborn genius which inspires the force of will to depict these scenes, carries the imagination away with it, both in the endless flight of the horsemen, and in the centrifugal impetus of the wide circle of destruction that sweeps round the group of the four angels.

The design of the ninth cut struggles in vain with impracticable material.* Nothing is visible of the strong angel who gives St. John the book, by no means a little one, to swallow, but the manly, melancholy head and the hands; all the rest is "clothed with a cloud," and consequently lost to view; and the feet are literally rendered "as pillars of fire," from which issue flames. In the same way the act of swallowing is beyond the range of any æsthetic rendering, while the infant angels in the sky, and the dolphins, swans, and ships on the sea, are all trivial accessories. It is only by a reference to the demands of a simple traditional faith, of an age believing in and cherishing the Bible, that the meaning of the conception as a whole can be explained.

On the tenth plate we see the woman clothed with the sun, and crowned with stars, standing on the crescent moon, and beside her the seven-headed crowned dragon, ready to devour her child as soon as it is born.† The new-born babe is already being carried up to God by two boy angels—a floating ethereal little group, full of Leonardo's grace. The description in this passage of the Revelation of the woman on the half-moon furnished ancient Christian art with the idea for the representation of the queen of heaven, but it is significant of Dürer's mode of interpreting the Bible, that he expressly distinguishes this creation from pictures of the

* Rev. x. 1–10. † Rev. xii. 1–6.

Immaculate Conception, by placing a large pair of wings upon the woman's shoulders, and thus characterising her as the symbolical figure of the Apocalypse. He relies in support of this view on the fourteenth verse of the twelfth chapter, where it says, "And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness," etc.

The eleventh cut shows the combat of the Archangel Michael and three angels with Satan and his dragons,* who have been hurled down upon the earth, here represented by the smiling shores of a bay. The composition is in no way equal in grandeur to the "Four Horsemen," or the "Angels of the Euphrates," nor are the figures so well drawn and so life-like; indeed, the only one of any real merit is that of the archangel, who is standing on the belly of the "old serpent," and piercing his throat with a long spear—a favourite subject both of old German and Italian art. The appearance of Saint Michael is all the more terrible by comparison with the harmless associate on either side of him, and he seems inspired by some unearthly strength; but the expression of this inspiration is only attained by a marked deviation from the natural proportions of the body, and a certain uncouthness, both of which are the result partly of intentional exaggeration, and partly of insufficient knowledge. The efforts made by the struggling limbs are so in excess of their natural powers, as to give a strange and antiquated stamp to the figure. It is owing to the mixture of excellences and defects, of passion and stiffness, of arbitrary power and of restraint, that this Archangel Michael has always found great admirers. At any rate, in no work of Dürer's is the old style, with its antiquated laws, so powerfully represented as in this figure of

* Rev. xii. 7, et seq.

St. Michael, which would consequently seem to have been executed earlier than the other cuts, unless Dürer took his idea from some far older illustration of the subject, of which we know nothing.

In the lower part of the twelfth cut is set forth the worship of the two monsters, who rise up out of the sea,* while above is seen the one, "like unto the Son of man," sitting with the sickle in his hand, and the angels hastening to the bloody harvest.† The crowned kings of the earth kneel devoutly before the seven-headed dragon; but signs of a different disposition may already be discerned in the group of burghers behind.

The thirteenth cut is devoted to the triumph of the elect, a subject to which the confused text of the Apocalypse repeatedly reverts. By cleverly uniting all the passages which bear upon it, and adhering exclusively to no one in particular, Dürer has been able to bring within the scope of one woodcut a composition which contains at least half a hundred small heads. His first idea was the kingdom of the Lamb, as described in the beginning of the fourteenth chapter, a passage which was readily interpreted to signify the reform of the church through the gospel, and to be intended as in direct contrast with the subject of the latter part of the same chapter, the fall of the spiritual Babylon, represented in the fourteenth cut, as already described. He has consequently introduced the apostle into the scene kneeling on the top of Mount Zion, where stands the Lamb‡ surrounded by the four beasts and the four-and-twenty elders,§ and the 144,000 of the elect, between whom and the redeemed heathen,‖ clad in white garments, who

* Rev. xiii.
† Rev. xiv. 14, et seq.
‡ Rev. xiv. 1.
§ Rev. xiv. 3.
‖ Rev. vii. 9, et seq.

stand before the throne of the Lamb, no separation is made. The elder who, in the thirteenth verse of the seventh chapter, speaks to St. John, is here indicated by Dürer in the act of restraining the Apostle from falling to worship at his feet, as related in the tenth verse of the nineteenth chapter. Indeed, many features of the descriptions given in the seventh and fourteenth chapters are repeated in the first half of the nineteenth chapter, the text of which is placed opposite to the woodcut, and has quite correctly given it the title of the "Marriage of the Lamb,"* notwithstanding that all three descriptions equally refer to the mysterious triumph of the elect, and that Dürer, who thoroughly knew the Bible, no doubt had them all in his mind.

The motley thronging crowd of the blessed gives to the design an essentially joyous and festive character; and as we gaze upon it we seem almost to hear the myriad-voiced triumphant hymns of the palm-bearing martyrs. It is the one agreeable picture of the series, and forms a relief and resting-place to the imagination after all the horrors of the Last Judgment. But it could only have created such an impression at this very point, and Dürer did well in reserving it till then. Notwithstanding that Bartsch, regardless of the text and of the arrangement of Dürer's book, unhesitatingly assigned the seventh place to this cut, and that Von Eye,† on external grounds merely, sought to justify the transposition; there is deeper and more intrinsic evidence in favour of not disturbing Dürer's original order, to which he also adhered in the later edition of 1511. The apotheosis of the Lamb forms a peaceful conclusion to all the previous horrible signs and visions, and at the same time points with solemn consolation to the joys of the world above.

* Bartsch erroneously calls this plate the seventh, and looks upon it as the illustration to Chapter 7.

† *Leben Dürers*, 143 et seq.

The two remaining cuts are a sort of earthly after-piece to the preceding one. The first of them, the fourteenth of the set, representing the impending destruction of the great Babylonish whore, has been already described.* The fifteenth brings the series to a close, and represents, in the lower part, one of the great avenging angels advancing with a stern countenance to shut up the dragon, the devil, for a thousand years, in the bottomless pit,† and above, another angel, showing the enraptured St. John the holy city of the new kingdom, which is to last for the same period;‡ or, as Dürer explains later, "the new and beautiful Jerusalem, which comes down from heaven, of which the Apocalypse speaks, that is to say, the holy, pure gospel, which cannot be obscured by the doctrines of men."§

The vignette on the title page, representing the Apostle seated on the edge of a cloud, writing his book, inspired by a vision of the mother of God, first appeared in the new edition of 1511, and may possibly have been intended as a concession to the worship of the Virgin. For the popular sentiment expressed in it harmonises but little with the contents of the Apocalypse, and its artistic conception accords still less with the spirit of the older designs which follow, and is, in truth, whether with or without the artist's intention, in every respect foreign to them. The religious needs of the age, however, could in no way dispense with the heavenly mediatrix, and Dürer, very likely, wished to make amends by this vignette on the title page for the offence he had no doubt given to pious minds in so distinctly introducing the winged woman upon the moon in the recognised place of the Queen of Heaven. At any rate the half figure of the latter appears here standing on the crescent moon, and

* Pp. 245–6. † Rev. xx. 1, 2. ‡ Rev. xxi. 2. § Campe, *Reliquien*, 130. *Dürers Briefe*, 12.

clothed with the sun, and with the crown of twelve stars upon her head.

What a contrast to Wolgemut's manner of treating the Church questions of the day is afforded by Dürer in this Apocalypse! The cool derision of the older master, his bitter contempt for, and direct opposition to, ecclesiastical organisation, find no echo in the mind of his pupil. Dürer's nature was fundamentally a religious one. He grasped his subject with pious earnestness and devout conviction, and his Revelation of St. John breathes the loftiest accents of youthful enthusiasm. And yet, notwithstanding, he took his place in the ranks of those opposed to the Church, though not upon the side of the half-heathen humanists, who, either openly or secretly, denied everything. He allied himself rather with the popular feeling, which would earnestly uphold the essence and the actual spirit of Christianity, while destroying all the false outward forms. In a word, Dürer already belonged to the younger generation of minds in Germany, who placed their trust in a pure form of belief, and he must be counted not so much among the humanists as among the reformers.

The technical execution of Dürer's Apocalypse is on a level with its intellectual and artistic conception, and inaugurated a new epoch in wood-engraving; but there is no ground for the assumption that Dürer himself handled the knife, or prepared the blocks for printing. It has, no doubt, long been a disputed question whether or not the old German painters cut their designs in wood themselves; and the partisans of both opinions have drawn their arguments chiefly from Dürer's work. Those who maintained that he did cut his own blocks, or at any rate some of them, adduced in support of their argument the cuts which had succeeded the best, and which appeared most faithfully to render the original drawing. But this is

clearly a most mistaken view; for the technical work of wood-cutting depends so greatly upon constant practice, that even the most expert draughtsman or painter who only occasionally handled the knife—a very different thing from the graver or burin—could never have equalled, much less surpassed, the professional wood-engraver (*Formschneider*). It is therefore rather among the least successful woodcuts that specimens of the painter's own handiwork are likely to be found. For the present, however, the question may be regarded as settled, that the practised professional wood-engravers, then so numerous in every town, did all the technical part of wood-cutting, and that the painter, the creative master, merely drew the design with pen, brush, or pencil, on the block,* leaving the engraver to execute the, so to speak, negative task of freeing the block from all extraneous material and making it ready to print from. The more carefully and skilfully he did this, and especially the less he departed from the master's own lines, the better would the woodcut when printed preserve the character of the original drawing. His knife could certainly more or less spoil it, but could not improve upon it. The exercise of his craft lay quite outside the province of the creative artist.

That this was the rule in Dürer's case may be looked upon as certain. Any further proofs in support of it would occupy too much space here, and will, moreover, come out of themselves in the course of our story. At the same time, however, it is not to be denied that Dürer occasionally tried his hand at wood-engraving. Indeed, he appears afterwards to look upon it as quite natural that the creative artist should lay aside the pen for the im-

* Compare Passavant, *Peintre-graveur*, i. 66–78. A good summary of all that has been written on the question is given by Woltmann in his work on Holbein, 2nd edition, p. 189, note 2.

plement of the wood-engraver, so as to be able to finish off at once some small work, and even declares "that an intelligent expert artist can show perhaps more power and skill in the rendering of common unimportant subjects than others are able to display in their more serious efforts." "Thence it happens," he continues, "that many a one traces upon a half sheet of paper, or engraves upon a little piece of wood in one day, something better and more artistic than another man's great work, the result, perhaps, of a whole year's most diligent labour: and it is a marvellous thing that God often bestows the power and intelligence to do some particular thing well upon one man alone, who has no equal in his own day, and whose like has not been seen for some time previously, nor will be for some time to come."* No trustworthy evidence exists, however, of Dürer having worked himself at wood-engraving; and as to that most important question, whether he engraved, or even helped to engrave, the Apocalypse, it can only be answered in the negative, and for the following reason. As the well-known monogram which appears in all the plates in the usual place—at the bottom in the middle—was first adopted, we know, in 1497, and the book was published in 1498, the engraving could not have taken more than a year; far too short a time for Dürer, with all his other numerous occupations, to have accomplished by himself so laborious a task. Once admit, however, that the blocks were handed over to professional engravers, and all possibility of pointing out what Dürer did, or of distinguishing his work from that of others, is at an end. His share in the matter cannot, in fact, be subjected to any critical investigation.

* Dürer, *Proportionslehre*, Book III., vol. 2. Compare Zahn, *Dürers Kunstlehre*, 103. From the wording and context of this passage it can only refer to wood engraving, not to sculpture in wood. By a great work Dürer means a finished painting.

It is as a painter and draughtsman, and not as himself an engraver, that Dürer must be considered the reformer of the old style of wood-engraving. The changes in the technical method hitherto pursued, and their rapid development, were caused by the fresh demands which he made upon the art, and by the clearness and precision with which he set forth those demands. Till Dürer's time wood-engraving was based upon the principle of flat outline and polychrome. Deriving its origin from miniature, and acting as a substitute for it, the printed picture with its strong outlines was, in fact, nothing but a framework to be filled in with varied colours by means of the brush or stencil. And so it remained, even after drawing had very greatly improved; witness the fact that the copies sold of Wolgemut's *Schatzbehalter* and *Weltchronik* were chiefly coloured ones. But with the advent of Dürer's first set of woodcuts, all this was changed. No aid from illumination was required in his Apocalypse; indeed, none could have been tolerated. A single tint took the place of the immemorial polychrome—one colour that of many.

We have already seen how Dürer's sense of harmony in colour, cultivated as it was on his travels, especially by the study of landscape, first taught him to combine form and colouring, and to distinguish objects from one another, not by different colours, but by gradations of colour. Applied to woodcuts, this simple method put an end altogether to the use of polychromy, for more effect and picturesqueness were obtained by the mere alternation of light and shade than could ever be produced by the varied colouring hitherto in vogue. Of course, in order to carry out this new style, Durer needed a wood-engraver who would entirely enter into his views; and no one was better fitted than he to train and develope such a craftsman, for probably no hand ever expressed its owner's mind so exactly, so firmly, and so unhesitatingly. This it is, I believe, which

explains the profound influence which Dürer exercised upon the art of wood-engraving. He knew exactly what and how much he might expect from the mere mechanical process, and that, and no more, he traced either with the pen, or oftener still with the brush, touch by touch, in those clear, regular lines which the eye so readily follows, and which every expert hand could also follow if it would without stumbling. He required much more from the block than any one before his time, though not more than it was capable of; a fact proved by the immense contrast between his woodcuts and his engravings on copper, as regards technical skill. But above all, he told the engraver exactly what he wanted.

Though Dürer no doubt began the somewhat laborious preparations for the Apocalypse directly after his return from his travels, it is pretty certain that he must have given his engravers the opportunity, before setting to work upon such large blocks, of practising upon simpler examples, in order to accustom them to his hand. It is difficult, however, to trace these preparatory works, owing to the probability of the famous monogram which was intended to serve as a sort of trade mark, not having been adopted till the completion of the Apocalypse series. Dürer's earlier mark, the two initials of his name side by side, is not found on any woodcut; but it is always possible that the monogram was afterwards added by way of protection to blocks that had been finished before its adoption. Some indication of this having been the case is furnished by one of his earliest woodcuts, "The Bath," (*das Männerbad*).* Six naked men, of different ages and build, are seen in various attitudes, in a covered bathing-place, from which there is a view of a landscape and town. The treatment

* Bartsch, No. 128.

of the nude figures, though certainly somewhat hard and stiff, is surprising for the time, and forcibly recalls the St. Sebastian in the Dresden altar-piece. The age of this composition can be determined with tolerable probability, from that of a dated pen drawing in the Kunsthalle at Bremen of women bathing (*das Frauenbad*), which is so similar in style, that it was evidently intended for a pendant. It represents six women of various ages, with four children, in a far more commodious closed wooden shed. Their bodies are less stiff and more finished, and recall the copper engraving of the four witches.* The cut bears the genuine date and signature, "1496. A.D." To the same year, if not earlier, must the "*Männerbad*" be assigned; a conclusion confirmed by the existence of an early impression of the woodcut in the collection of M. Blasius at Brunswick, unsigned, which shows that the monogram must have been added to the block afterwards.

The most remarkable of Dürer's early engravings on wood is the "Holy Family, with the three hares:"† grand in the antique character of its conception, and in the simple modelling of the figures. The full-formed bodies, the delicate oval face of the Virgin, reminding us of Schongauer, the charming Infant Christ, standing with one little foot upon the other, and the two cherubs floating above with the crown, which display a truly Italian, not to say Florentine, grace, all seem to reflect in this one composition the most varied impressions of his travels. On the other hand, the great "Martyrdom of St. Catherine,"‡ besides its fantastic and confused arrangement, shows all the crude figure-drawing of the Apocalypse. It is to be remarked, too, that all

* In the foreground lies a switch, a sort of birch broom, just like the hieroglyphic in one of the letters from Venice, the meaning of which it serves to explain.

† Bartsch, 102. ‡ Bartsch, 120.

Dürer's earlier woodcuts are about the same size as those of the Revelation of John. "Samson vanquishing the Lion"* is represented in an open landscape, in an energetic commanding attitude; the lion which he has seized by the throat is strikingly natural, far more so, for example, than the one in the copper engraving of St. Jerome in the wilderness. In this cut Dürer appears to have used the miniature he brought from Venice in 1494 as a model, only making some alterations in the position. Besides the Jewish Hercules, he has also depicted the Greek hero engaged in an enigmatical combat, with the inscription "*Ercules*" at the top.† The scene has a distant affinity to the large copper engraving of the same name.‡ But here the hero, armed with a club, appears accompanied by two women, one of them draped and young, the other, intended perhaps to represent Envy, hideous, lean and old, and flourishing a jaw-bone; and they are all assailing two armed knights stretched on the ground. As yet no explanation has been discovered of the mediæval idea which here underlies the legend of Hercules; and so long as this is the case, it cannot be decided whether the engraving of a knight galloping to the left, with a soldier following him, is a part of the same design.§ If so, then they must be hastening to the aid of the prostrate knights, and the two sheets must have been intended to be fastened together. But on the other hand their corresponding edges do not sufficiently accord to admit of this. In any case, however,

* Bartsch, 2.

† Bartsch, 127.

‡ See above, p. 221. Is it possible that Dürer did not intend to represent Samson in the woodcut just referred to (Bartsch, 2), but Hercules with the Nemean lion? At any rate, in Altdorffer's representation of that incident (Bartsch, 26), Hercules is seizing the lion by the jaws in exactly the same way, only he has a bow and quiver on his back, which are wanting in Dürer's woodcut.

§ Bartsch, 131. This is the view adopted by von Eye, *Leben Dürers*, 171.

there can be no doubt about the contemporaneous origin of the two woodcuts.*

This mythological woodcut again introduces us to the circle of the Nuremberg humanists, the life and soul of which was Conrad Celtes, the apostle of classical studies in Germany. In spite of his unsettled, wandering life, he retained a lasting attachment for his Franconian home, and was especially fond of Nuremberg, where the imperial laurel had been bestowed on him with great ceremony at the Diet of 1487; and where he could count upon numberless congenial friends.† Even after he had been summoned in 1494 to the University of Ingolstadt, and to Vienna by the Emperor Maximilian in 1497, he still kept up a lively correspondence with Nuremberg, and was fond of going there from time to time to stay with Wilibald Pirkheimer, with whom he was on very intimate terms. He also corresponded with Pirkheimer's learned sisters, especially with Charitas, to whom he addressed an ode full of spirit in 1502. When she afterwards became abbess of the convent of St. Clara, the Franciscans who superintended it took offence at her correspondence with the philosopher, and prohibited her from writing Latin, a fact of which Wilibald indignantly informs him in 1504.‡ It was in his beloved Nuremberg that Celtes's most important publications were printed, and

* To avoid giving a mere tedious list of them, those of Dürer's remaining woodcuts which should follow here chronologically will be mentioned farther on as opportunity offers.

† Engelbert Klüpfel, *De vita et scriptis Conradi Celtis Protucii*, Freiburg, 1827. Compare also Jos. Aschbach, *Roswitha und Conrad Celtes*, 2nd edit. Vienna, 1868. The family name of the poet was properly Pickel or Bickel, that is, Meissel (chisel), which he Latinised from the word caelare, and Grecised. As a scholar should, in his opinion, have three names like the Romans, he called himself Conrad Celtes (or Celtis) Protucius. In the same way Gerhard of Rotterdam styled himself, Desiderius Erasmus Roterodamus.

‡ Klüpfel, *De vita*, &c., ii. 46: "Charitatem sororem meam abbatissam creatam scias. Ξυλόποδες vero ipsi inhibuisse, ne posthac Latine scriberet: vide temeritatem, ne dicam nequitiam hominum!"

illustrated with woodcuts, under the superintendence of his trusted adviser Dr. Hartmann Schedel; and in this way the poet exercised an influence, not to be undervalued, upon the art of Nuremberg. So early as 1485, he had brought out Seneca's *Hercules Furens*, in which the hero, with the assistance of Pallas, slays Lycus because the latter had ventured to attack his wife Megara; but whether the introduction of the young woman in Dürer's Hercules can in any way be connected with this is an open question.

Celtes was also the intimate friend of Sebald Schreyer, familiarly called Clamosus, the Dean of St. Sebald, who edited the *Weltchronik* with Schedel. It was in honour of him that Celtes composed his sapphic ode to St. Sebald, which appeared at the beginning of the year 1490, ornamented with a woodcut of a very old-fashioned and meagre kind, even for that period, representing the saint, with pointed shoes, standing beneath a Gothic canopy of the kind frequently met with in the *Schatzbehalter*. The second edition of the ode contained a much better woodcut, in which St. Sebald is standing upon the capital of a column, with a six-sided plinth, just like the great saints of the Peringsdorffer altarpiece, by Wolgemut; his head is surmounted by some Gothic twig-work, interlaced with vine-branches, and below are the arms of Schreyer and Celtes.* Both the design and the engraving of this cut show a great advance, and it has very likely for this reason been ascribed to Dürer;† but in all probability it belongs to the year 1496, and no doubt came from Wolgemut's studio, as did also the coloured copies, which have exactly the same colours as the woodcuts in Schedel's Chronicle. The same may be

* Celtes' monogram is given thus; ⁂ which stands for Conradus Celtes Protucius Poëta.

† Retberg, No. 91; Bartsch, App. 20; Heller, 1865.

said of the print, also coloured, of the Plague-stricken man, which Theodoricus Ulsenius, the physician, published as a fly-sheet in 1496.* This Ulsen, a Frieslander, was another warm adherent of Celtes.

At that time Conrad Celtes cherished the great idea of showing the world, and especially the sceptical Italians, that Germany was not a land of barbarians, upon which the light of classical antiquity was only just beginning to dawn, but that it had already shone there brightly so far back as the tenth century. In order to accomplish this, he did not content himself with his own poetry in antique garb, but published besides, with the help of the *Rheinische Sodälität*, the first German Literary Society, founded by himself in 1491, many older works, all of equal importance, as well as some by a lady, the learned nun Roswitha or Hrotsuitha, of the convent of Gandersheim in Lower Saxony. To Nuremberg was allotted the honour of first publishing these proofs of the existence, not only at that time but in the past, of classic learning in Germany. They were also to be embellished with illustrations. As, however, the poet could not be there himself, and was, moreover, extremely anxious that his ideas and his allegorical conceits should be accurately rendered, he sent minute directions as to how the work was to be done, and thus introduced that system of fixed rules from which German art, and Dürer especially, suffered so much. As early as 1493 he sent to a Nuremberger, whose name is not known, "a sheet, to be given to the painter, containing instructions as to the design he was to draw, and how it was to be done."† The poet

* Compare von Eye, *Leben Dürers*, 100.

† Klüpfel, *De Vita*, &c., ii. 147: "Adjunxit chartam, tradendam pictori, ut, quod praescripsit, delinearet." In the same year, Celtes busied himself in Nuremberg about some mythological illustrations to Ovid: "Ex iisdem Tolophi litteris intelligimus Celtem Norimbergae eum haereret, in eo fuisse, ut antiquorum deorum prosapiam et Fastorum sex libros imaginibus illustrandos curaret." Klüpfel, *Ibid.* ii. 148.

appears to assume that it will be understood to which painter his project is to be entrusted. Afterwards similar orders were sent by Celtes, through Hartmann Schedel, who gave them to various masters, chiefly, no doubt, to his neighbours Wolgemut and Dürer, with the former of whom, as we know, he was very intimate. This seems to have given rise once more to a kind of friendly contest between master and pupil, but with a less satisfactory result, particularly so far as Dürer was concerned. The blocks, indeed, are so imperfectly and roughly cut, and altogether so badly done, that it is often difficult even to conjecture who drew the design. No doubt the reason was that the painter had not the same interest in superintending the engraver as if the publications had been his own. He was satisfied with merely making his drawing on the block, which the agent then delivered at random to the first good wood-engraver, perhaps the cheapest he could find. There is indeed no other way of explaining the great difference between what are manifestly contemporary woodcuts by one and the same master.

In all such cases it is naturally easier to give a negative than a positive opinion; and I do not hesitate consequently to say that amongst the woodcuts of the edition of the *Opera Roswithæ* of 1501, there is nothing from Dürer's hand.* The loose uncertain rendering cannot merely come from the engraver's having cut his lines too slightly. And I would also take this opportunity of at once excluding from Dürer's works the illustrations in the *Revelationes Sanctae Brigittae*, a book which was brought out by Anton Koburger, first in Latin in 1500, and two years afterwards in German.† The en-

* Heller, Nos. 2064–2068, 2088, and 2092. Retberg, No. 47.

† It is only in the third edition of 1504 that we find on the five imperial escutcheons, in the upper corner to the right, Dürer's monogram and the date 1504. Had this improbable insertion been Dürer's own, he would

graving here is better, and carried out with some regard to the design; but even allowing this much, there is still a great resemblance to the illustrations in the Roswitha. Both are by an old master, who loves stiff folds, broken-up at the end into a number of sharp angles, and clinging to the figures as if wet. A series of pen sketches representing the life of St. Benedict appears to me to be by the same hand. They are now dispersed. One has been reproduced by M. Hausmann as an ornamental title for his book; another, formerly in the Posonyi-Hullot collection, is now at Berlin; and there is a third in the Print Room at Munich.*

On the other hand, Dürer's co-operation in Celtes's book, *Quatuor libri amorum* (Nuremberg, 1502), is an ascertained fact. In this work several other writings are included as an appendix: as, for instance, a description of Germany in verse; a work on the origin, situation, customs, and institutions of Nuremberg; the *Hymnus Sapphicus* upon the Life of St. Sebald; the *Ludus Dianæ*, which Celtes, with twenty-three companions, performed before the Emperor at Linz on March 1, 1501; the charter accorded to his Rhenish

certainly have given the date of the drawing, not that of the new edition of the book. It is, therefore, nothing but a little liberty on the part of his friend the printer. The same explanation may also dispose of the arms of Florian Waldauff, printed on the back of the same page. Compare Bartsch, 158; Heller, 2118, 2151; Retberg, 45, 46.

* B. Hausmann, *A. Dürers Kupferstiche*, &c.: the saint, seated in a pulpit, is reading prayers out of a book to three monks seated below. *Katalog von A. Posonyi's Dürer-Sammlung*, No. 3231: the saint looks down out of the window of a Gothic building upon a round disk, which, from its varied contents, is probably intended to represent a picture of the world. In the lower part of both designs, on the right, is a white space in the shape of a round trefoil arch. The Munich drawing shows us the saint blessing a dead child, and there is the same empty space on the left. Compare the cut in the sixth book of the Brigitta, where the lovers in the lower part vividly recall, both in subject and sentiment, the copper engraving called "The Promenade." Others, like the large cut in the fifth book, recall Schongauer's more delicate forms.

Society of Scholars and Poets; a Panegyric upon Maximilian I.; and, lastly, two letters, one from Sebald Schreyer, the other from Celtes to him. The volume is adorned with eleven woodcuts of very different kinds. Some of the minute directions or prescriptions which Celtes furnished for them are still preserved to us in a volume collected by Hartmann Schedel, in the Royal Library at Munich.* Amongst them are the instructions for the second woodcut of the book, 'Philosophy,'† which was designed by Dürer, for the scroll which hangs down from the breast of the principal figure, who is enthroned, and wears a wreath of oak and vine-leaves, bears his monogram. Round the figure are four little shields, with busts of Ptolemy, Albertus Magnus, Plato, and Cicero. The name of Virgil can also be distinguished. In the corners are heads of the winds as symbols of the four elements and temperaments, all explained by various inscriptions.‡ The engraving is very poor, but it just enables us to determine, by comparison, that the design for the first woodcut on the back of the title-page is also Dürer's work. It represents Conrad Celtes kneeling, with his cap and laurel-wreath in his hands, and offering his book to the Emperor Maximilian.§ The likeness of the stout beard-

* *Codex Lat.* 434. Compare A. Ruland, *Die Entwürfe zu den Holzschnitten der Werke des Conradus Celtis*, in the *Archiv für zeichn. Künste* ii. 254–260.

† Bartsch, 130; Heller, 2063; Retberg, 48. I pass over the ornamental title-page, which is also a woodcut.

‡ In the upper margin is the proud and somewhat premature inscription: "Sophiam me Graeci vocant, Latini sapientiam. Aegypti et Chaldaei me invenere, Graeci scripsere, Latini transtulere, Germani ampliavere," and in Celtes' directions is added, though it is left out in the cut, "et illustravere."

§ Retberg, 49; Passavant, 217; Heller, 2089. Passavant has, with good reason, admitted this woodcut among Dürer's Works, but excluded the similar compositions in the *Opera Roswithæ*, of Celtes offering his book to the Elector Frederick of Saxony, and the nun Roswitha presenting her works to the Emperor Otho II.

less poet is done from nature, but that of the enthroned Emperor is idealised, and resembles the figure of Philosophy, On each side of the throne are vine-tendrils, and above branches, in which angels and birds are introduced. Round it are the Austrian escutcheons; and below is the inscription, "*Qui maledicit principi suo, morte moriatur*"—a free rendering of a verse in Ex. xxi.

There is still one more woodcut in the book which I would claim for Dürer, viz. the last, Apollo pursuing Daphne, who is being changed into a laurel-tree. This concluding cut seems to have been appended by Wilibald Pirkheimer of his own accord. In the upper part of it, between the scutcheons with the birch-tree of the Pirkheimers and the Siren of the Rieter family, to which Pirkheimer's wife belonged, is a scroll with an inscription in three distichs, and the title V. P. ΔΑΦΝΙΦΙΛΟΙΣ.* Below, the youthful Apollo with impassioned gesture is about to lay hold of Daphne, whose limbs have already begun to change into a branching tree. The expression of pain and fear upon her countenance is well given, but the powerful stride of the god rather too closely resembles the similar bearing of the Hercules in the Nuremberg picture of 1500. Notwithstanding that the cutting is somewhat rough, and that the shadows are indicated by plain, hard, transverse strokes, the outlines allow of Dürer's design being followed with tolerable accuracy. Another woodcut to which these remarks apply, and which may fitly be introduced here, as helping by its analogy to the above illustrations to further explain the matter, is the bookmark of Wilibald Pirkheimer.† It bears the same coats of arms already described, and beneath three genii, fighting together with little wind-wheels and other play-

* Vilibaldus Pirkheimer Daphnophilois.

† Retberg, 50; Bartsch, App. 52; Heller, 2139.

things; the whole enclosed in a sort of frame formed by two cornucopias, supporting genii who hold in their hands garlands of vine leaves and grapes. Above is the inscription, "*Sibi et amicis P.*," and below "*liber Bilibaldi Pirkheimer.*" If they are carefully examined and compared, it will be seen that Dürer not only designed this ingenious vignette for his friend at the same time as the woodcuts just described, but that the cutting of the block was entrusted to the same engraver. Hence the striking affinity between it and the woodcut of Celtes before the Emperor Maximilian, the arrangement of which is the same.

The problem is more difficult when we come to examine the remaining woodcuts in the *Libri Amorum*, and especially the one following the Philosophy. A shield containing the monogram of Celtes occupies the centre; above is seen Celtes himself writing; below is the fountain of the Muses, and, seated near it, are three nude women with wings, playing the zither and the lute. On each side are figures, one above the other; those on the left representing Minerva, with Mars in the garb of a foot soldier at her feet, Mercury with bird's feet, and playing the flute, and Hercules, accompanied by Cerberus, pursuing with his club the Stymphalian birds; and those on the right, Venus with Cupid, Phœbus draped and drawing his bow, and Bacchus also draped and crowned, and with a goblet and cask near him. In dealing with figures so small and so close together it was impossible for an inexperienced engraver to avoid spoiling the original design. And the same may be said of the following cuts, which are half landscape and half cartographical representations of the four parts of the world in which the poet's scenes of love are laid. To express an opinion whether these compositions are by Dürer or by some other master is easier than to prove it. At the same time there is every reason, both extrinsic and intrinsic, for attributing them to Wolgemut. His par-

ticipation in the work is proved by the two woodcuts which precede the description of the town of Nuremburg and the hymn to St. Sebald.

This description, composed by him when he was a guest in Pirkheimer's house,* was intended by Celtes as a monumental record of a city which was dear to him above all others, and to which he was closely united by the fondest memories and by the proudest hopes for the cultivation of classical studies. On one side of the title-page are the three coats of arms of Nuremberg; the other displays a view of the city, with the superscription, "*Urbs Norinberga quadrifinia*," which is nothing but a small replica of the woodcut in the *Weltchronik* of Hartmann Schedel and Wolgemut, the only difference being that on each of the four principal towers of the city there is a weathercock under the form of a little mannikin clinging to the tower with the tips of his hands or his feet and brandishing a hammer. This but slightly altered view of Nuremberg could only have issued from Wolgemut's studio. And the same may be said of the next illustration, representing St. Sebald, which is a mere simplified repetition of the picture mentioned before of that saint on the capital of a pillar. He is here standing upon the ground, and is seen from the front; but a comparison of the two cuts is enough to show that this one was copied from the other.†

So, too, with the illustration of the epic poem written by

* It begins with the dedication to the council of Nuremberg: "Cum nuper relaxandi animi gratia in urbem vestram, ornatissimi et felicissimi senatores, concessissem, vestramque florentissimam rempublicam, ordinem prudentissimi senatus, modestissimos cives, religionis superumque curam, sacras aedes, ceteraque urbis vestrae ornamenta diligentius contemplatus fuissem: coepi multa apud me tacito animo cogitare, quonam pacto et ego vestris virtutibus monimentum aliquod relinquerem," &c.

† Passavant, No. 185. See above, p. 267.

Guntherus Ligurinus,* to celebrate the deeds of the Emperor Frederick I., which, with several other small works, was first published at Augsburg in April, 1507, by Erhard-Oglin.† There are near the end of this *editio princeps* two woodcuts, the first of which is a reproduction of the figure of Philosophy in the *Libri Amorum*. But on the last page of the work there is a new cut representing Mount Parnassus. In the centre of the landscape, seated under a laurel-tree, and playing the violin, is Apollo, a youthful, well-proportioned figure, full of life, crowned with a wreath, and looking upward in the same attitude as Raphael's Apollo on Parnassus in the Stanza della Segnatura. Farther back, on the left, Pegasus takes his flight near the Castalian spring, represented by a fountain of elegant Renaissance shape, in which two dolphins are spouting water. On the right is Silenus riding, and Bacchus lying down, with Dryads, Oreads, and four Satyrs blowing trumpets, small figures, which have suffered greatly in the cutting. Quite in the background, on the left and right, are seen little round temples of Minerva and Diana, and in front of the latter Actæon torn by dogs. The principal figure, that of Apollo, has preserved more of the excellence of the original design, being on a larger scale, and strongly recalls the Apollo pursuing Daphne. There is in the British Museum a coloured pen-drawing of the same figure, but rather larger and more draped, with sandals on the feet, and the head inclined, and seen more from the side. The God is seated on an enormous stump of a tree, with a laurel bush behind him,

* This poem, composed at the end of the 12th century, was found by Celtes in a convent.

† "Ligurini de gestis Friderici primi Augusti libri decem, carmine heroico conscripti, nuper apud Francones, in sylva Herciuia et Druidarum Eberacensi coenobio a Conrado Celte reperti; postlimmio restituti. Aeternitati et amori patriae consecratum." Panzer, *Annales typographici*, vi. p. 136, No. 41.

and above are the monogram and date, 1507, both of which appear to me to be genuine. This design, afterwards slightly altered, probably served as the study for that in the woodcut;* and must, consequently, be considered as Dürer's work.

The same woodcut is found in the *Melopeiæ sive Harmoniæ*, the first edition of which was published by Celtes at Augsburg, through Erhard Oglin, or Œglin, in August, 1507. This volume contains hymns and odes in the style of Horace, composed by Petrus Tritonius and other members of the learned society already referred to. It is the first book in which music was printed with moveable type.†

The earlier editions of these illustrated books of Celtes have unfortunately become very scarce, but few copies having probably been struck off, owing to the difficulty experienced by the poet in raising sufficient money to cover the costs of printing. This would account for the illustrations having as yet met with no detailed notice in the history of art. They may not, it is true, be pleasing specimens of wood engraving; but their influence over the development of Dürer's talent was so important that it was impossible to avoid lingering over them. Now that attention has been drawn to them, it is to be hoped that the whole subject may be more closely and thoroughly investigated by competent persons, especially by students of the history of literature, and new light thrown upon it. So far as can be at present ascertained, Dürer's share in the work was somewhat as follows.

Conrad Celtes was staying at Nuremberg in 1493, just as Schedel's Chronicle was being brought out, and as a friend of Sebald Schreyer, one of the publishers, he may well have

* Compare Waagen, *Treasures of Art*, i. 232.

† Panzer, *Annales typographici*, vol. vi., p. 137, No. 42. Denis, *Merkwürdigkeiten der Gærellischen Bibliothek*, p. 568. Vienna, 1780.

been inspired by the appearance of this splendid volume to form the plan of getting up a similar edition of the works which he had so long been preparing. Naturally, he first thought of Wolgemut, and it must have been for that painter that he, the same year, sent instructions for the project; for Dürer was still absent from Nuremberg, and only returned from his travels in the following year, 1494. There could, therefore, have been no question of him at first; nor is there consequently anything by his hand in Celtes' first illustrated publication, the *Opera Roswithæ* of 1501, the whole of the woodcuts for which probably issued from Wolgemut's studio. In the meantime Dürer attracted the notice of the coterie of humanists, and received a few orders, probably through the instrumentality of Pirkheimer. He furnished, for example, the designs for the woodcuts of Celtes before the Emperor Maximilian, Philosophy, Apollo with Daphne, and Apollo upon Parnassus, some of which appeared in the *Libri Amorum* of 1502, and others in the poem of Guntherus Ligurinus, published in 1507. Dürer appears, however, not to have adhered sufficiently strictly to the instructions and prescriptions of his learned friends. Even the Philosophy, probably his first effort, differs essentially from the written scheme preserved to us by Hartmann Schedel; and his endeavour in the other sketches to obtain more space and picturesqueness, by bringing one or two of the principal figures into prominence, and by perspective subordination of the rest, seems to have been by no means to the taste of his patrons, whose redundant ideas and symbolical allusions were thereby lost. It is evident, therefore, that Dürer's designs could not have been justly appreciated, and Pirkheimer must have inserted the Apollo and Daphne into the *Libri Amorum* on his own authority and at his own cost. Others may have been set aside altogether, as,

for example, the beautiful pen drawing in the British Museum, representing a nude figure of Apollo, holding a staff in his right hand, and in his left a sun shooting forth rays, while behind him appears a woman in a stooping position, and as if dazzled by the beams of the sun, on which is written the word APOLLO, inverted—a sign that the figure was destined for a woodcut.*

Another very remarkable drawing, discovered at Windsor Castle by C. Ruland, must, I think, be assigned to the same series. In the foreground are seen three mythological or allegorical female figures, one crouching, another sitting, and the third lying down. Only the last is draped; she is leaning her head, on which is a winged cap, on one hand, while with the forefinger of the other she points to a dish in front of her filled with water, in the act, probably, of divining by means of the drops of milk or oil floating on the surface. Behind her is a basket, of antique form, out of which peep curiously two winged Amorini, while from a third, who is quite in the foreground, a leveret has just escaped, and is disappearing in a hollow in the ground. Upon a scroll fastened to this basket is the enigmatical inscription, in inverted letters, PVPILLA AVGVSTA. In the middle distance are seen, standing upon a dolphin in a little lake, and holding up an inflated sail, three other women, of whom the undraped one in the centre appears to be the chief. The crouching woman in the left foreground appears surprised, and is beckoning to this group. In the background rises a city on a height, surmounted by a castle, the same city as appears in the copper engraving of St. Antony,† of 1519, only inverted, and with some alterations in the lower buildings. The upper group of buildings are almost

* See an article in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, 1875, vol. xxi. p. 460. *British Museum. The German School. Drawings by Old Masters in the*

† Bartsch, 58.

exactly like those in the "Feast of the Rose Garlands," painted by Dürer at Venice, in 1506, for the German merchants. In that picture they are quite in the background, close to the head of Dürer's own portrait of himself, standing with Pirkheimer in the right middle distance. That we have here an old view of the fortress of Nuremberg, from the west side, there can be no doubt, though, as may be seen by comparing the sketch with the engraving of 1519, there are a good many arbitrary alterations in the latter, the pointed roofs on the towers, for instance, being omitted, and replaced by flat battlemented ones, a change which would give Nuremberg a look of the south and an appearance of great age. The monogram in the Windsor sketch, which is at the bottom in the middle, is genuine, and done with the same pen as the drawing itself; from its form it may be referred to about the year 1500. The D being inverted shows that the sketch was intended for engraving. As to the date 1516, it has been added in pencil subsequently by another hand; and so likewise has the strange inscription on the scroll. Another drawing, which is in the University Galleries at Oxford, should be mentioned here. It represents two nude women, one lying on the ground, leaning her head on her hand, the other, corpulent and elderly, kneeling behind and flourishing a whip. The sketch is signed with the monogram, and dated 1503, and has, no doubt, like the one at Windsor Castle, some mythological meaning.

PVPILLA AVGVSTA — the orphaned Augusta! What do these words mean? Conrad Celtes can perhaps give us some information. His poetical invitation to come from Italy to Germany having been responded to by Apollo,* it

* Celtes, *Ars versificandi*, 1486, to which is added the beautiful Sapphic ode *Ad Apollinem, ut ab Italis cum lyra ad Germanos veniat.*

became necessary that Nuremberg, as the new seat of the Muses, should have an antique past, and the humanists accordingly called the city "*Urbs Noricorum*," instead of "*Norimberga*"; while Dürer was fond of styling himself "*Noricus*," although Nuremberg lay far enough away from the old Roman province of Noricum. But Celtes knew of something better than this. He had in his possession the Itinerary of the Emperor Antoninus, a topographical chart which was bequeathed by him in his will to the Augsburg patrician, Conrad Peutinger, and has since become famous under the name of the "Peutinger Tables."* In this itinerary he found the Roman colony Augusta Praetoria—also mentioned by Pliny and Strabo—a city in the territory of the Salassii, in Cisalpine Gaul, now rightly identified with the modern Aosta, in Piedmont. Celtes, however, showed his Nuremberg friends the courtesy of calling their city by this venerable name; as, for instance, in his description of Nuremberg, and in his panegyric upon the Emperor Maximilian, and again in his dedication of the works of Roswitha to the Elector Frederic the Wise of Saxony, the closing words are: *Vale ex Norimberga Augusta Praetoria, diversorio nostro litterario, aede Bilibaldi Pirckhamer, utriusque linguae et philosophiae studiosissimi.*" This explains, too, the long-sought-for meaning of the letters A. P. in the imprint at the end of the *Libri Amorum* and the *Opera Roswithæ*. These initials, which appear in white upon a black ground on both sides of a vane planted upon three heraldic mountains, merely denote, in fact, the place where the works were printed—Augusta Praetoria, *i.e.* Nuremberg.†

To return, however, to the drawing. Though the new light which is thus thrown upon it is no doubt insuf-

* It is now in the Imperial Library at Vienna. Klüpfel, *De Vita*, &c., ii. 164.
† See Klüpfel, *ibid.* ii. 90.

ficient to completely solve the riddle of its meaning, it at any rate makes it clear that some mythological and allegorical glorification of Nuremberg is intended. Perhaps the sketch was originally destined for the title-page of Celtes' description of the city, and was laid aside because Wolgemut's simple view seemed more satisfactory. Considering how much respect and honour Conrad Celtes enjoyed in the circle of the humanists of Nuremberg, and that he was in fact the author and father of "Augusta Praetoria," it is easy to understand some one of his adherents there adding after his death, which occurred at Vienna, February 4, 1508, the words PVPILLA AVGVSTA to Dürer's drawing; and if the addition was made at the same time as the date 1516, the drawing may be taken to represent the final wail of humanism just before the first lightning flashes of the Reformation.

In this way Dürer became mixed up with the intellectual movement of the day. Strongly disposed on the one hand towards the national impulse which aimed at the reform of the church and the deepening of religious feeling, and no less equally influenced, on the other, by the literary impulse which aspired to a union with the wisdom and learning of antiquity, an extension of secular knowledge, and a purely humane system of culture, humanistic ideas and ideas of reform struggled together within him, as they did in the greatest minds of the nation; and through the functions of his art he exercised a decided influence upon both. Now one, now the other tendency gained the upper hand in him, according to his mood and his surroundings; but his own artistic position, as well as the political state of his country, made him at the height of his greatness finally range himself on the side of religion. The choice was, however, preceded by a series of significant vacillations. When he left his home, he had in him the foundations of a deep

warm-hearted belief, of which his Apocalypse was the first enthusiastic outcome. But during his travels he came into close contact with nature and with the Italian Renaissance, and on his return was more and more drawn into the circle of the humanists with whom his aged master Wolgemut had associated himself. Thus what may be called the ideal apocalyptic phase became gradually overpowered for some years by a more realistic one, which sought a new landmark and standpoint in nature, in antiquity, and in the Italian Renaissance. This latter period of development was influenced in some measure by a painter—the Venetian, Jacopo dei Barbari—a study of whose character is indispensable for the proper understanding of Dürer's history.

CHAPTER X.

THE RIVALRY WITH JACOPO DEI BARBARI.

"We see examples of it among the Romans when they were at the height of their prosperity; remains of what they did are still before our eyes. There is but little art of a like nature to be found now in our works."—DÜRER.



OME throughout all the vicissitudes of ages, has never given up her position as mistress of the world, and has always, under ever changing titles, continued to put forward her old pretensions. Whilst to the German masters like Wolgemut and Dürer, influenced as they were by the feelings and consciences of their countrymen, the papacy of the middle ages represented the antique Rome of the Apocalypse, their Italian compeers regarded it as the glorious revival of a long-buried splendour. They saw ancient Rome rise once more out of her ruins, and as formerly she sent out her legions, so now a host of invisible spirits and visible forms, as though anxious again to secure the mastery over what threatened to escape from the domination of the Church. Once more she appears to her descendants as the victorious figure represented on the coins of the Caesars, fully equipped and helmet on head, seated upon trophies in front of a triumphal arch,

and holding an effigy of Victory in her hand. Thus is she displayed in the engraving of a Venetian, Jacopo dei Barbari,* the Proteus among Italian painters of the fifteenth century, whose indistinct figure repeatedly, from time to time, crosses Dürer's path, and who, next to Wolgemut, exercised the most direct influence upon his artistic development.

To judge by his name, Jacopo was originally a dependent of the patrician family of the Barbari at Venice; but the information about himself and his works is so scanty that even down to the present time there have been doubts as to his nationality.† The Anonymus of Morelli, who calls him Jacomo de Barbarino, relates that he went to Germany and Burgundy, and adopted the style of painting in vogue there; and certainly up to the present time no painting has been identified in Italy as by his hand. Yet in the year 1521 there were several in the house of the Cardinal Domenico Grimani, for whom Jan Gossaert de Mabuse undertook the illustration of the celebrated Breviary.‡ Possibly, the subsequent intercourse between the two masters may be traced back to their relations with the patriarch of Venice, himself a great lover of the fine arts. Jacopo dei Barbari cannot have given up his residence in Venice for good before 1500, for the woodcuts of his plan of that city were not completed till that year. This work had taken three years to prepare, and the six large blocks are still

* Passavant (*Peintre-graveur*, iii. 139) erroneously considers this unsigned sheet a free copy of the Victory (Bartsch vii. 526, No. 23). There are copies of it, with alterations by Jeronymus Hopfer (Bartsch, No. 59), and by Giovanni Battista del Porto (Passavant, *P.-gr.* iv. 150, No. 7). The initial letter of this chapter is a reduction from the original. See F. Kenner, *Die Roma-Typen, Sitzungsber. der histor. phil. Klasse der Wiener Akademie*, xxiv. 253.

† E. Harzen, *Jacob de Barbary*, in the *Archiv für zeichn. Künste*, i. p. 210. See, on the other hand, H. Grimm, *Ueber Künstler*, ii. 141.

‡ *Dürers Briefe*, 223, 224.

preserved in the Museo Correr at Venice. The undertaking was started by the Nuremberger, Anton Kolb, one of the most respected members of the Fondaco dei Tedeschi or Guild of German merchants at Venice. In the petition which he presented to the Signoria in October 1500, soliciting permission to publish Jacopo's plan, he brought to their notice, amongst other hitherto unknown specialities, the novelty of the method which enabled cuts of such a size to be printed.* No doubt, in his trade as a publisher, he had profited by the progress of his native city in the arts of engraving on wood and printing, and was probably employing skilled workmen from Wolgemut's and Koburger's studios, not to say from Dürer's also.

This leads us next to Barbari's connection with Nuremberg, which must have been a very close one, since tradition early numbers the Venetian master among Nuremberg artists, under the name of Jacob Walch, that is, the "*Wälsche*" or Italian. Neudörffer classes him in the list immediately before Dürer, but saw himself only two pictures of his, one of them the portrait of the architect Hans Behaim, who died in 1538. He erroneously makes Barbari die as early as 1500, and adds that Hans von Kulmbach, Dürer's contemporary and subsequent assistant, was his apprentice. All this points to an early residence of Barbari in Nuremberg, certainly before the year 1500. Later we find him working as the colleague of Mabuse in the service of Count Philip, the natural son of Philip, Duke of Burgundy. They were commissioned to adorn the count's castle of Zuytborch with paintings, and are on this account eulogised by his biographer, Noviomagus,† as the Zeuxis and Apelles of their age. The last we hear of Barbari is

* Cicogna, *Iscrizioni Veneziane*, iv. 647, 699, *et seq.*

† Geldenhauer, *Vita Phil. Burgundi, Episcopi Ultrajectensis*, published by Freher in *Rerum Germ. Scriptores*, iii. 184.

in the service of the Archduchess Margaret, regent of the Netherlands, as "valet de chambre et peintre attaché à la princesse." This was in 1510, in which year he gives a receipt to the treasurer of the archduchess, written in Italian and signed "Jacobus de Barbaris," with the caduceus after the signature. How fond his mistress was of him is shown by her having granted to him, March 1, 1511, a yearly pension of a hundred livres, "en considération des bons, agréables et continuels services que notre bien-aimé painctre, Jacques de Barbaris, nous a par ci-devant fait au dit estat de peintre et autrement, considérant sa debilisation et vieillesse et afin qu'il ait désormais mieux de quoy vivre et soi entretenir en notre service le demeurant de ses anciens jour." He is mentioned as dead in July 1516.*

The great view of Venice, already spoken of, appears to have been essentially instrumental in establishing his fame. In the middle of the upper part of the plan he has introduced Mercury in a cloud of glory with his caduceus, and the inscription, "MERCVRIVS PRE CETERIS HIVIC FAVSTE EMPORIIS ILLVSTRO (*sic!*) VENETIE. M.D." The attribute of the tutelar deity of his native city generally served him as the mark for his copper engravings and paintings, especially in foreign countries, where he desired thus emphatically to denote his Venetian birth; hence, too, his usual *sobriquet* among the amateurs of engravings of the "maître au caducée."

Barbari seems to have left Venice for good soon after the completion of his view of that city. At any rate, he was not

* In the inventory of the archduchess of 1515–16, there appear first eleven, then five, then seven copper plates, "bonnes pour imprimer sur papier," engraved by the late J. de B., "peintre exquis de différents mistères" the last seven "mises dans une logette de bois." L. de Laborde, *Inventaire de Marguerite d'Autriche*, p. 25. E. Galichon, *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, xi. 311, 445 (1st period), and viii. 223 (2nd period).

there in 1506, for Dürer, in his second letter to Pirkheimer from Venice, says: "I would also tell you that there are much better painters here than Master Jacob is with you; but Anton Kolb swears that there lives no better painter on earth than he. The others laugh at him for this and say, if Jacob were so good, he would have stayed here." The point worthy of remark in this passage, besides the strong interest which Dürer not only himself displays for Barbari, but also presupposes in Pirkheimer, is a certain antagonism which it betrays, especially coupled with the fact that he has just before said that what pleased him so well eleven years ago was now no longer to his taste.

Another proof of Barbari having been at that time well known and much beloved in Nuremberg is shown by the existence in Dr. Hartmann Schedel's manuscript volume of the year 1504, already mentioned as being in the Munich Library,* of a number of copper engravings, no doubt pasted in at the time, which are almost exclusively Jacopo's. A striking fact in connection with this is that Schedel's most important authority, Cyriacus of Ancona, has a special partiality for Mercury, and always speaks of him with the deepest veneration. The god appears to him in dreams; his day, Wednesday, he esteems as particularly fortunate and sacred; and that he regards him as a kind of patron saint is proved by a strange prayer, in his diary, to the "propitious Mercury, the father of eloquence, and of all the arts in which genius and talent are displayed, the best guide along all paths," &c. The same volume also contains a remarkable representation of "Hermes Mercurius," by Schedel's hand, evidently borrowed from Cyriacus. In spite of the weak drawing, it is easy to recognise Mercury striding along, with pointed beard, winged hat and shoes,

* See pp. 197 and 233.

and caduceus, just as Greek archaic art was accustomed to depict him.*

Springer very justly recognised the connection of this sketch of Schedel's with a tolerably early coloured pen drawing of Dürer's in the Ambras Collection at Vienna, representing that strange allegory of Pirkheimer's favourite author Lucian, according to which the Gallic Heracles, who is really identical with the Hermes of the Greeks, by means of a gold chain issuing from his mouth and penetrating into the ears of his hearers, captivates men, and draws them irresistibly after him; the chain being an emblem of his eloquence. In this drawing Dürer has almost entirely retained the character and position of Schedel's figure of Mercury, except that the god, floating on the clouds, is turning his head back towards a group consisting of a woman, a warrior, a scholar, and a burgher, who are rivetted by his eloquence. There are many things in this design of Dürer's, for example, the profile of the burgher, the figure at the edge of the composition, that recall Jacopo dei Barbari. In the upper left-hand corner are inscribed, in elegant Greek uncials, though not quite correctly, a number of Mercury's different names, which are to be found in much the same order in the mythological tract of Cornutus, first printed in the year 1505.† There is another coloured pen drawing of Dürer's in the Ambras Collection, of the same period, and produced under the same influences,

* On p. 38 is Cyriacus' invocation: — "Artium mentis, ingenii, facundiaeque pater, alme Mercur, viarum itinerumque optime dux." Compare O. Jahn, *Aus der Alterthumswissenschaft*, p. 346, &c. A Springer, *Vorbilder von Zwei Dürerschen Handzeichnungen in der Ambraser Sammlung* in the *Mittheilungen der k. k. Central-Commission*, vii. 80.

† A later woodcut after this drawing adorns the title-page of the *Inscriptiones sacrosanctae vetustatis*, composed by Apianus and Amantius, and printed at Ingolstadt in 1534. There is a very striking copy of the drawing in the British Museum. (Hausmann 112, No. 152).

representing Arion lying on a dolphin's back, and clasping its body with his legs.* And in the manuscript volume already referred to is a small slight pen drawing of the same subject, evidently by Schedel's hand; as well as a sketch of Apollo and Diana with a hound, and a fight between Centaurs, very much out of drawing, and evidently an unsuccessful attempt at a design after an antique low-relief. Hartmann Schedel was consequently the very man to superintend the carrying out of Celtes' instructions as to the illustration of his books.

According to all accounts, Schedel appears also to have been on friendly terms with Barbari, whose lengthened stay in Nuremberg may have contributed to establish these personal relations. How many and which of Barbari's pictures still existing in German collections were painted at this period is at present uncertain, for less even is known about the chronological order of his works than about the works themselves, the only one of them which bears the full name, together with the date (1504), being the remarkable example of still-life, almost equal to a miniature in its finished detail, in the Augsburg Gallery. This picture, however, serves to connect with Jacopo's sojourn at Nuremberg the half-length of the Saviour, signed with a monogram, formerly belonging to the celebrated Praun Cabinet, and now in the Weimar Museum. Mademoiselle Przibram, of Vienna, possesses a similar head of Christ, also signed; and a third piece of the kind, representing our Saviour, in the same rose-coloured drapery, with the hand extended in the act of blessing, is to be found in the Dresden Gallery, under

* With the inscription below, "Pisce super curvo vectus cantabat Orion." The sketch has been engraved by O. Jahn, and described by Baron von Sacken (*Mittheil. d. k. k. Central-Commission*, viii. 123). An exactly similar drawing, with the date 1519, is in the Kunsthalle at Hamburg, and is probably a copy.

the name of Lucas van Leyden;* as also are the half-figures, not so well preserved, of St. Catherine and St. Barbara.† The two last appear to have belonged to the side wings of an altar-piece, which at once indicates their German origin. Both in his paintings and in his engravings, Barbari united an evident striving after the simple truth of nature with a singularly refined grace of outline and an almost sickly delicacy of form. His pictures of Christ have an expression of rapture and sentimentality, owing to the half open mouth, perhaps imitated from antique sculpture, and the slight fault in the position of the eyes, like a cast, by which they are all distinguished. The painting is on the whole clear and limpid and uncommonly thin; the glazes are very slight, and are consequently much worn off. Two very characteristic and delicate pen drawings of mythological groups by Barbari are preserved in the Dresden Cabinet of Prints, under the name of Lorenzo di Credi.‡

The appearance of a foreign master possessed of such rare qualities and enjoying the protection of the learned senators, must have made a great impression upon the young painters of Nuremberg. Hans Kulmbach never entirely disowned his teaching as to form and technique; and Hans Baldung Grien, unless certain distinctive features of this painter's early pictures are deceptive, must also at that time have passed through Nuremberg and experienced his influence. But what is of the most importance for the history of art is the deep effect which Barbari exercised both by attraction and repulsion over Dürer's development.

Dürer's early and close connection with Barbari need no longer be inferred from his works only, since we have distinct proof of it in the account which he gives of his

* No. 1804.

† Nos. 1795 and 1796.

‡ There is a facsimile woodcut of one of them, Tritons carrying off Nymphs, in the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 1873, viii. 226.

first intercourse with the Venetian master. In a passage, subsequently suppressed, of his introduction to the 'Treatise on Human Proportions,' Dürer says that "he had found no one who had described the measurement of the human body but a man named Jacobus, born in Venice, a good and delightful painter!" "He showed me," he continues, "a man and a woman which he had done by rule and measure, so that at that time I would rather have understood his meaning than seen a new kingdom. And if I had what he showed me then I would have it published in honour of him, and for the general good. But I was still young, and had never heard of such things. Yet art was very dear to me, and I set my mind to think how I could arrive at a similar result; for I could see full well that the said Jacobus would not show me his reasons clearly. But I set myself to find out what I wanted to know, and read Vitruvius, who describes briefly the proportions of the human body. Making a beginning then with these two men, I have steadily day by day continued my investigations."*

In what year this first meeting with Barbari should be placed cannot be determined with any certainty from Dürer's remark, that he was young at that time, and had never heard of the laws of proportion. It is quite as likely that Jacopo may have visited Nuremberg before the year 1498, as it is possible that Dürer became acquainted with him at Venice in 1494, and perhaps found work in his studio there. This personal intercourse first began to take effect upon Dürer in the year 1500, to which date belongs a figure drawing having reference to the laws of proportion, in the British Museum;† and in the following years its influence

* Zahn, *Dürer-Handschriften des Britischen Museums*, in the *Jahrb. für Kunstw.* i. 14.

† Waagen, *Treasures of Art*, i. 233; Hausmann, p. 112, No. 158. The sketch represents in outline a female

on his works can be distinctly traced, as well as the awakening of a counter current.

It is characteristic of Dürer's quality of mind that the Italian artists' method of creation, the result, as it were, of an inspired impulse which caused them at once to seize hold on forms that were akin to their feelings and ideas, was to him wholly incomprehensible. While the Southerner attains his aim, so to say, at a bound, the German wants to take account of his manner of arriving at it; and it was this love of thoroughness, of investigation, of abstraction, peculiar to the German nature, which early displayed itself in Dürer, and hindered him from persevering in any course the principles of which he could not master.

To judge from Barbari's productions, he did not possess any more than other artists a hard and fast set of rules for the proportions of the human frame. Whatever secret knowledge he may have affected to the young Dürer, the great differences in his nude figures prove that they were not constructed upon any universal formulæ of proportion. In him, as in all the artists of that time, there was a continual struggle between the opposing principles of a close imitation of nature and an adherence to traditional form, without either of the two gaining the mastery or being fused into the other. His works, and especially the thirty engravings, the only ones of his as yet described, point to the school of Mantegna for their origin, and show the softness and refinement of form which we meet with in the Bellini, and which characterises the art of the Venetian capital at that period. To the same source may be traced the poverty of invention and the being contented with

figure divided into parts, and bears the date 1500. The background is hatched in green, and on the reverse side there is the same figure with divisions. Upon a small folio sheet accompanying it is an explanation of forty-four lines, in Dürer's hand.

single figures, or very simple compositions without any particular background. The realistic elements which formed at the same time an essential part of Venetian painting were especially fostered in Barbari by his long residence in the North. The inclination to subtlety and the expression of a more tender sensibility, which are quite peculiar to him, and which distinguish him from all his countrymen, allowed the kindred tendencies of German art to affect him all the more powerfully. As the fundamental character of that art reminded him of his own country, he followed its method of procedure as well, and formed his refined technical treatment upon its models. He was the first Italian to employ, in his plan of Venice, the improvements made in Germany in the art of wood engraving; nor did he in his copper engravings at all adhere to the vigorous, abrupt method of working with short slanting strokes, which Mantegna had established in North Italy, but rather adopted the transparent, delicate, pointed style of the German masters after Schongauer. His small easel pictures, too, show nothing of the broad Italian treatment; the colouring is more decided and transparent, while the execution is remarkably refined and limpid, and the glazes very delicate. The advantages of oil-painting and the power of intensifying its effect in small pictures were probably learnt by Barbari in his early days at Venice, under the influence of Antonello da Messina; but he owes the complete development of this power to his long sojourn in Germany and Flanders.

That Dürer, precisely during those years in which he was under the influence of Jacopo dei Barbari, should have adopted a careful, almost miniature style of handling the brush, not only in his water-colour and tempera studies from nature, but also in his oil-paintings, cannot be the result of accident. Among the water-colours the following

may be mentioned:—a life-size head of a stag, struck dead by an arrow beneath the left eye, dated 1504, and painted upon paper with great sharpness and delicacy with the point of the brush, but now much faded, formerly belonging to the Abbé de Marolles, and now in the Bibliothèque Nationale at Paris; the wing of a magpie or jackdaw, seen from underneath, with the date 1500, carefully executed upon parchment, partly with gold, but somewhat damaged, formerly belonging to the Crozat and Mariette collections, and now in the Berlin Museum; the powerful crawling stag-beetle, of 1505, most minutely painted, in the possession (1880) of Mr. C. S. Bale in London. Add to these four drawings in the Albertina at Vienna, viz.:—the drawing dated 1502, and so often copied and imitated, of the hare with the inconceivably life-like fur, in which the animal, a young one, is represented sitting, crouched together and timidly sniffing with ears erect, probably upon the table of the painter, as the cross-bars of the window are distinctly reflected in its eyes;* a grass-plot, and a group of green plants, of the natural size, seen quite close and done with botanical exactness, both of them minutely finished water-colour drawings on paper and dated 1503; and lastly, for in all probability it belongs to this period, the little bunch of violets on parchment, to the reality of which nothing seems wanting but the scent. These paintings necessarily recall Barbari's dead partridge and iron gauntlets on a white ground in the gallery at Augsburg, a picture executed in 1504, and probably the oldest specimen of still-life painting.

Among Dürer's paintings, the small picture, of 1503, of

* The numerous imitations of this leveret in various collections, at Dresden (as a rabbit), Berlin, Weimar, Rome (Pal. Corsini), and elsewhere, have nothing to do with Dürer. A copy in Grünling's collection bore the mark of Hans Hofmann: "Ih 1582." Heller, 131. People have gone the length of ascribing every hare executed in miniature or water-colour to Dürer.

the Virgin, in the Imperial Gallery at Vienna, shows distinct traces of Barbari's influence, in the pinched up corners of the eyes and mouth, the studied pose of the head, the broad lights, and the clear flesh tints, which stand out forcibly against the dark background. An unfinished Salvator Mundi, with the globe held in the left hand, is still more like similar subjects from the pencil of Barbari. This sketch was in the Imhoff collection, and passed from the possession of the painter F. R. Reichardt of Munich into that of Alexander Posonyi of Vienna. It was a mistake to consider this as Dürer's last work, which death prevented him from finishing.* The weak type of figure, the sentimental attitude, the eyes, the mouth, the bright red robe, and indeed everything in the drawing and colouring, all point much rather to the period when the influence of Barbari's work was most in the ascendant. Indeed, were it not for certain sharp angles in the drapery on the right, and the way in which the hair on the left is finished, it might be attributed to Barbari himself. Perhaps, however, this unfinished picture just marks the memorable moment in Dürer's development when he found himself unable any longer to follow Barbari, but rather impelled to oppose him. Two small side figures, about a quarter life-size, of St. Onuphrius and St. John the Baptist, standing in landscapes, shared the same fate as the Salvator Mundi. Though begun with great care and showing a certain grace, they remained unfinished. Senator Klugkist obtained them from the Heinlein collection in Nuremberg for the Bremen

* It is thus noted in the elder Wilibald Imhoff's inventories of 1573: "The unfinished Salvator by Albert Dürer cost me 30 florins. This was the last work which he did." Von Eye, *Dürer*, p. 455, synoptical table No. 2, and appendix, p. 532. J. Sighart, *Geschichte der bild. Künste in Bayern*, Munich, 1862, p. 626, with a woodcut. The panel, which is 1 foot 10½ inches high by 1 foot 6½ inches wide, was preserved in the Imhoff family until it passed by inheritance to the Hellers.

Museum. According to Heller, they bear the very probable date of 1504.* St. Onuphrius, grey-haired and grey-bearded, with only a cloth round his loins, turns to the right, resting one foot upon the other, and leaning with both hands on a long staff. The Baptist stands fronting the spectator, and looking out of the picture, in rather a strained attitude, a large book in his left hand, and pointing with his right to the Lamb at his feet; his hair and beard are stiff and yellowish, like the skin in which he is wrapped. The nude parts of the two figures are full and well drawn, the hands and feet large, the noses long and pointed. The design of the landscape recalls Wolgemut's manner and Dürer's earlier engravings.

There is a striking affinity between these two figures and a nearly contemporanous woodcut of Dürer's which represents the same saints, and not St. John the Baptist and St. Jerome, as hitherto assumed.† In this St. John stands on the left, with crisp hair and beard, and with his legs apart as in the picture, an attitude which reminds one vividly of the colossal figure of the same saint, by Wolgemut, in the Schwabach altar-piece.‡ The other figure of an old man, with a large book in his hands, is identified with certainty by the tendrils and leaves which he wears under his cloak about his naked body, and also by the absence of the cardinal's hat and the lion, as the Egyptian hermit, St. Onuphrius, who took the Baptist as his model. The rather lengthy proportions of the body must be attributed to Barbari's influence; and the same may be said of the figures of the woodcut in which Pope Gregory the Great

* Heller, p. 227. On wood; height, 1 foot $10\frac{3}{4}$ inches; width, $7\frac{3}{4}$ inches. The unfinished condition of these little panels is a matter for regret; but, at any rate, it gives us a very instructive opportunity of seeing how Dürer began his pictures. I have not seen the date upon them.

† Bartsch, 112; Heller, 1869; Retberg, 58.

‡ See above, p. 86.

is represented between the martyrs St. Stephen and St. Lawrence.* These two woodcuts belong to a set of moderate size, which were not prepared, either as to drawing or engraving, with the care which had been bestowed upon the Apocalypse and the first large blocks. The master is less ambitious about their success, as they were probably executed merely to supply the requirements of the market. On this account, too, they mostly represent saints singly, or in groups, according as they were wanted for church festivals or pilgrimages. The majority, indeed, answer very well to the description of those which Dürer, according to his Netherlands Journal, disposed of as "pieces belonging to a bad set of woodcuts (*Stücke des schlechten Holzwerks*)." †

Amongst the mediocre woodcuts of this kind are the following. A stiff St. George, on a rearing horse, spearing the dragon,‡ in which the horse, though not so heavy, is certainly no better drawn than the one in the St. Eustace; the way in which it stands out, as a white silhouette on a black ground, appears foreign to wood engraving, and as though borrowed from the method of engraving on copper. The Holy Family with the two angels under a porch§ though much better designed, is engraved with but little skill and care; the architectural features of the Romanesque roof, with its arched opening in the background, divided in two by a column, a motive on which the Italian Renaissance loved to dwell, are pleasing, and well constructed. In the spaces between the round of the arch and the upper corners of the sheet are figures of Adam and

* Bartsch, 108; Heller, 1876; Retberg, 123. On the other hand, the St. Stephen between two bishops (Bartsch, 109), is justly denied to be Dürer's; Retberg, A. 11.

† *Dürers Briefe*, &c. 103; Campe, *Reliquien*, 106.

‡ Bartsch, 111; Heller, 1832; Retberg, 86.

§ Bartsch, 100; Heller, 1806; Retberg, 61.

Eve reclining; the latter bearing an evident resemblance to the Amymone of the copper engraving. The St. Christopher with the birds in the air, of whom two are fighting,* is weaker, and more in the conventional style of such little devotional prints. The same, too, may be said of the St. Francis of Assisi, in a well-wooded landscape, receiving the stigmata.† There is more originality in the design of the two hermit saints Antony and Paul, seated on the borders of a forest. St. Paul is on a visit to St. Antony, and the raven who was accustomed daily to bring the latter a loaf comes flying down with one split into two parts, which excites St. Paul's pious admiration.‡ The Holy Family with the five angels is equally well conceived, and charmingly arranged, but weakly executed.§ Lastly may be mentioned the three saintly bishops Nicolas, Udalrich, and Erasmus, under a portico; short, but dignified figures, with well-draped robes.‖ The date of all these woodcuts cannot be placed much before the year 1504, though it is certainly not later than that. They obviously belong to a time when Dürer's attention was entirely occupied in perfecting himself in the technique both of engraving on copper and of painting.

It was in the year 1504 that Dürer finished the first great picture which, from its excellent state of preservation, must have been entirely executed with the greatest care by his own hand, even to the most minute detail. This picture is "The Adoration of the Magi," now in the Tribune of the

* Bartsch, 104; Heller, 1823; Retberg, 56.

† Bartsch, 110; Heller, 1829; Retberg, 57.

‡ Bartsch, 107; Heller, 1867; Retberg, 59.

§ Bartsch, 99; Heller, 1991; Retberg, 89. It requires looking into very closely in order to make out the five angels. A pen drawing of the Virgin, No. 327 in the former Posonyi-Hullot collection, is a deceptive copy of this woodcut.

‖ Bartsch, 118; Heller, 1874; Retberg, 122.

Uffizii at Florence. Mary sits on the left, looking like the happiest of German mothers, with the enchantingly naïve Infant on her knees; the three Wise Men from the East, in magnificent dresses glittering with gold, approach, deeply moved, and with various emotions depicted on their countenances, while the whole creation around seems to share their joyous greeting, even to the flowers and herbs, and to the great stag-beetle and two white butterflies, which are introduced after the manner of Wolgemut. The sunny green on copse and mountain throws up the group better than the conventional nimbus could have done. The fair-haired Virgin, draped entirely in blue with a white veil, recalls vividly the same figure in the Paumgärtner altar-piece. Aërial and linear perspective are still imperfect, but the technical treatment of the figures is as finished as in Dürer's best pictures of the later period. The outlines are sharp, the colours very liquid, laid on without doubt in tempera, and covered with oil glazes; the whole tone exceedingly fresh, clear, and brilliant. If it was Barbari's fine work which incited Dürer to this delicate and careful method of execution, he has certainly far surpassed the Venetian, not only in form and ideas, but also in the solidity of his technique. This technique is undoubtedly of Northern origin, as is also the harmony of colour, which Dürer here realizes, and does not soon again abandon. It must not be forgotten, however, that the difference between this technique and that practised by Giovanni Bellini is one of degree and not of principle; judging at least by the unfinished painting of Giovanni's in the Uffizii, in which the design is sketched either with the pencil or brush, and the colours then laid on in tempera, and afterwards repeatedly covered with oil glazes. Dürer appears to have owed the opportunity of producing this his first masterpiece in painting to a commission from the elector Frederick

of Saxony. Christian II. presented it to the Emperor Rudolph II. in 1603, and in the last century it was sent from the imperial gallery, in exchange for the "Presentation in the Temple," by Fra Bartolommeo, to Florence, where it now shines as a gem of German art amongst the renowned pictures in the Tribune of the Uffizii.*

Waagen† thinks the landscape of the background so like that in the celebrated engraving of St. Eustace that the date of the latter may be hereby approximately fixed; and although the ground on which the conclusion is based is incorrect—the two landscapes having only a general and very remote resemblance to each other—yet the conclusion itself is not without warrant. The "St. Eustace"‡ shows, as an engraving, artistic qualities identical with those which "The Adoration of the Magi" shows as a painting. Invention and arrangement are far surpassed by minute delicacy of technique and by careful execution of each separate detail; and there is in both the same distinguishing general tone of brightness and tenderness. The completion of the engraving cannot be placed much earlier than the year 1504, although it was certainly finished before the Nemesis. It is the largest plate that Dürer ever did;§ and undoubtedly he wanted to make it something out of the common. Yet its importance and its charm lie chiefly in the unusually fresh landscape, with the castle in the

* Heller, 238, 253.

† *Handbuch der deutschen und niederl. Malerschulen*, i. 205.

‡ Bartsch, 57. So Dürer himself calls the saint in the Netherlands Diary; and the older authorities do the same. The name of St. Hubert, of whom legend relates the same wonderful hunting adventure, and whose festival, with veneration of his relics, is still solemnised in Cologne, as a means of protection against the bite of dogs, and is much frequented by the country people, did not come into vogue till later.

§ Heller's statement, p. 443, that this plate belonged to the Emperor Rudolf II., and that he had it gilt, is certainly unfounded. The gilt plate, which is in the possession of F. X. Redtenbacher, a merchant, at Kirchdorf in Upper Austria is not the

background. Into this landscape, the most beautiful which Dürer ever engraved, the figures are introduced like a lot of separate wooden toys: there is no sense of connection between the stiff-looking stag with the crucifix between its antlers, the knightly hunter kneeling in devotion before it, his horse tied to a tree, and the five lithe hounds in various attitudes of repose, in the foreground. The horse still shows the same unpleasing forms as that of the knight in the drawing of 1498, and it has a human look about the eyes like the horses of the apocalyptic riders. The most successful part is the group of greyhounds, which Agostino Veneziano afterwards copied in a separate engraving. On the other hand, in a slight pen drawing of 1505, in the Cabinet of Engravings at Munich, representing multifarious groups of wild animals, horses, and cattle, attacked by dogs and lions, all in mad confusion,* though the modelling of the cattle is poor, that of the horses is less stiff and altogether more pleasing. Dürer is evidently now studying animal forms in the same earnest manner as he had before studied landscape.

Jacopo dei Barbari himself also painted hunting scenes taken from profane or mythological subjects;† and an example of his perfect understanding of the forms and proportions of a horse is furnished by his engraving of Pegasus, in which a splendid charger, skilfully foreshortened, is galloping forward towards the right.‡ Nothing

original one, but, as I am quite convinced, the copy of 1579 (Heller, No. 731); only the initials G and H on both sides of Dürer's monogram have been taken away.

* Lithographed by N. Strixner.

† Besides the piece of still-life already referred to, the archduchess Margaret possessed in 1516 "un autre tableau exquis, où il y a ung homme avec une teste de cerf et un crannequin au milieu et le bandaige; fait de la main de feu maistre Jacques de Barbaris.' (L. de Laborde, *Inventaire de Marguerite*, 25, No. 138).

‡ Passavant, *P.-gr.* iii. 140, No. 29. There is a copy, turned the same way, by Nicolaus Wilborn, with the inscription, EL TEMPO; Bartsch, viii. 445, No. 5.

was, however, farther from his taste than the infinite variety of detail and unrestrained exuberance of ideas in which Dürer still at that time indulged, and which were so repugnant to the Italians. It was on this account that Michelangelo Buonarroti blamed Flemish painting, and German painting as well, so severely, "because," he said, "they want to put in a single picture a number of elaborately finished things, each of which would be sufficiently important by itself, and the result is that not one of them is thoroughly satisfactory." Real art, therefore, according to him existed only in Italy. "This is so true," he adds, "that, if even Albert Dürer, a refined and skilful man in his method, tried to deceive either Francesco d' Hollanda or myself, by making believe that a work either composed or copied by him was done in Italy, let the picture be a good, bad, or indifferent one, I should certainly see at once that it was done neither in Italy nor by an Italian."* This severe judgment of the stern Florentine has a certain degree of justice in regard to Dürer's earlier period. But if, as we shall see was the case, Dürer gradually freed himself from these defects, or rather these exuberances, to recognise at last, like Michelangelo, the true essence of art in straightforward simplicity, Barbari's example may not have been without its influence in producing this result. Dürer might very well learn from the Venetian to concentrate his ideas and to moderate his imagination so far as to be contented with a single subject. Anatomy like that of the half-length St. Sebastian in an engraving of Jacopo's, belonging to the Baron E. Rothschild at Paris† must have tested severely Dürer's ambition. For

* Manuscrit de François de Hollande; A. Raczynski, *Les Arts en Portugal*, Paris, 1846; 14, 15.

† Published in the Héliogravures Amand-Durand, Paris, 1874. Galichon, No. 9.

to fathom the forms and proportions of the human body was the painter's most important task, and the less the German master was helped by actual study of the nude, the more he thought to discover, by theoretical investigation, the secrets of which he fancied the Italian possessed the key. Yet he could not rest satisfied with mere imitation; he is ever returning to Nature, and seeking through her for the way out of all contradictions.

It may appear remarkable to us now that a master so independent as Dürer should so long have suffered himself to be unsettled by one who neither in talent nor in general importance can in any way compare with him. Taste and the fashion of the day, however, have their own laws, and there were circumstances under which Jacopo dei Barbari could be held up, even to a Dürer, as a model not to be approached. The more peculiar the whole artistic manner of the Venetian appears to us, the more was it fitted to excite admiration among the first adherents of humanistic culture in Nuremberg and in the North generally. It was precisely the combination in that manner of certain peculiarities which caused the Renaissance especially to appeal to the German eye, accustomed to the types of Cologne and Flanders. To it, Barbari's figures, with their smoothly flowing draperies, so unlike the angular folds of Mantegna, would naturally appear to be the embodiment of the antique ideal. If we, in these days, see false sentiment in the over-slender, gently bending forms with flat, insignificant heads, and discern in them a foretaste of that seductive tendency to exaggeration which later brought on the decline of painting, no such considerations entered into the judgment of contemporaries. To them it appeared rather, as may be gathered from Dürer's own words, that herein lay the solution of the problem of the nude figure, concerning which Nuremberg art busied itself so eagerly at that

time. The first known attempt at such a solution by as close as possible an adherence to the observation of nature was made by Wolgemut in the year 1497 in his print of the Four Witches; but in his later engravings he allowed other subjects and the play of his own fancy to turn him aside from it. Dürer followed him faithfully, observing and learning from him, and, in execution, rivalling him. Then Barbari appeared on the scene, and equally stimulated Dürer's zeal. Being already much farther advanced in the art of engraving, the latter could learn nothing from the superficial, uncertain, and meagre technique of the Italian, nor would he feel any inclination to copy him. But he strove all the more eagerly to realise the principles of Barbari's drawing, in the hope of finding the fountain of truth beneath their mysterious charm, only, however, to be disappointed, and to become as a consequence more and more antagonistic to Barbari, so that the latter's influence remained positive as to choice of subject only, and in the matter of form became negative.

We are able to follow the course and progress of these changing relations between the two in the gradual development of that engraving which first brought Dürer before the world in the full consciousness of his power, as undisputedly the greatest master of the burin, viz. the "Adam and Eve."* The date under the proud inscription, "*Albertus Dürer Noricus faciebat,*" shows that the plate was finished in 1504. That it was also begun in that year is proved by the pen drawing of the same date, which passed from the Posonyi into the Gsell collection at Vienna, and is now in the possession of Herr von Lana at Prague. This drawing shows, upon a dark background, the two principal figures, exactly of the same dimensions as in the engraving, but

* Bartsch, No. 1.

in reverse. It was no doubt intended for a finished study, as well as a design for the print. The proofs which he took from the still unfinished plate show the care with which the artist proceeded in this work, and that he intended to produce something out of the common. Two of them are in the Albertina at Vienna and a third in the British Museum.* It was not Dürer's custom to test his work on the metal by such preliminary essays; at least, the only other example of the kind is the proof of the "Great Hercules," in the Albertina.† Instructive as these proofs are to us, they could only have convinced Dürer that this kind of precaution was not needful in his work. He so clearly knew what he meant to do, and felt so sure of his hand, that, once he had sketched the outlines from right to left on the plate, he went straight to work, step by step, without the least hesitation, until he had finished, so that in the proof states completely finished work joins directly on to the blank part of the sheet. No proof was really necessary, for he was fully master of his means, and nothing required adjusting or harmonising afterwards. Now though this method of finishing the plate right off was all very well in old engravings, which were mere outlines, it was altogether a different matter here, where the first consideration was to model the whole so as to make it stand out clearly on a powerful deep background, and thus obtain an effect almost like that of colour. The difficulties attending this mode of artistic manipulation appear to our eyes, accustomed though they are to the richest development

* The two proofs of the "Adam and Eve" in the Albertina were acquired in 1820 at the Durand sale at Paris, for 1500 francs. In one of them the whole of the right half of the print and one of Adam's legs are still left white, that is, there are nothing but slight outlines; in the second, Adam's other leg is also white. The copy in the British Museum corresponds with the last-named, earlier state.

† See above, p. 224.

of technical means, so enormous that we can only regard with mute astonishment the talent which evoked them for the first time only to overcome them with such ease.

Meagre as Jacopo dei Barbari's method appears in comparison with the wealth of technical resource displayed in the "Adam and Eve," still Dürer's preliminary studies for the work show traces of the Venetian's influence. Whether the man and woman which Jacopo showed Dürer as done according to certain measurements were intended for Adam and Eve, we do not know; but it is certain that our first parents have always afforded to art a favourite pretext for representing the nude, and Dürer had no other object in choosing this theme. But in the finished engraving there is scarcely anything that recalls Jacopo dei Barbari, except it be the graceful pose of Adam's lifted foot. Happily, we possess two of Dürer's rough sketches for this plate, which show us the figures in a much earlier stage, and enable us to get a better idea of them. They are on strong, fine, very old paper, and belonged once to the Bianconi collection in Milan, and the Fries collection in Vienna, but are now in the Albertina.* One of them shows us the Adam of the engraving in the same position, and with the same forms, only rather more slender; the Eve of the other sheet is, on the contrary, altogether different from the engraved figure. Her body is elongated and spare, and the gesture constrained, her legs are in the same position as those of Adam, one arm is raised up to pluck the apple from the tree, while the head is bent back slightly on one side. The whole bearing of the meagre figure, the oval of the insignificant head, even the shaky, irregular character of the drawing, are as distinctly characteristic of Barbari as they are unlike Dürer. On turning over the drawings,

* Heller, p. 49.

which are slightly washed with brown round the figures, it is easy to see at once that the bodies are constructed "according to certain measurements," with compasses and ruler. Adam's torso is curiously planned out in circles, Eve's in squares; the head of the latter also appears in two different positions. Upon the leg on which Adam stands the very same proportions are marked as are given by Dürer in the first book of his treatise on Proportion, and they coincide in the main with those of the figure described there as the normal one of a man of middle height.*

If these drawings furnish proof of the fact, so important in the history of Dürer's development, that the figures of the "Adam and Eve" engraving of 1504 were constructed according to the laws of some theory of proportion, they must, besides, date back some years previously; and we are able consequently to see how Dürer gradually disentangled himself from the seductive influence of the Venetian, and, relying upon himself, instead of upon a foreign model, kept eagerly advancing by the aid of theory and a keen observation of nature, until he attained that complete state of independence which we know him to have reached in the year 1504. The fully developed proportions, and the short type of head of the Eve in the engraving, are repeated in the pretty woodcut representing the holy penitent St. Mary of Egypt, transported to heaven by angels.† The body, round which the hair flows in long and luxuriant tresses, is remarkable for its rare symmetry and noble bearing. Very

* Figure B. If we examine these proportions, which only differ in one or two cases from those of the figure in the book, we find them to be, so far as regards the length of the leg seen in front: Inside bend of the leg, $\frac{1}{14}$, instead of $\frac{1}{13}$; outside above the knee, $\frac{1}{16}$; inside above the knee, $\frac{1}{19}$; the middle of the knee, $\frac{1}{18}$; inside below the knee, $\frac{1}{20}$; extremity of the calf outside, $\frac{1}{16}$, instead of $\frac{1}{15}$; below the shin bone or above the instep, $\frac{1}{10}$, instead of $\frac{1}{34}$.

† Bartsch, 121; Heller, 121; Retberg, 60. Usually, though wrongly, called "St. Mary Magdalen."

charming, too, are the little angels, who are making no slight effort to support their burden, especially the one on the left, holding up the foot of the saint.

This wavering adhesion to Barbari, which made Dürer imitate him and at the same time rejeet his influence, is plainly evidenced in other copper engravings. Take for instanee Barbari's small print of the areher Apollo and Diana,* with the body of the huntress only half visible. It evidently inspired Dürer in his treatment of the same subjeet,† and yet he retains nothing but the general arrangement of his model; the conception of all the details is different, and the exeeution more solid. Barbari's gaunt, stiff Apollo, whose attitude much resembles Dürer's Adam, is represented by the latter as closely knit and muscular, and with a vigorous aetion, like the Hercules chasing the Stymphalian birds in the Nuremberg picture of 1500. The Diana, it is true, has rather too sentimental a look, and betrays a further resemblanee to Barbari's manner in the curved and long-drawn single strokes. Barbari's two small prints, of a man with a trough-shaped cradle, and its pendant, an Eastern woman with a ehild and distaff,‡ may have been in Dürer's mind when he designed his "Turkish Family," in whieh the three figures are brought into one plate.§ Their great, staring eyes betray the early origin of the engraving, and the elegant pose of the woman's legs points to a foreign inspiration. Dürer, however, is much more independent in his handling of the anatomy of the male figure. The St. Sebastian, turned to the left, with his arms bound above his head, was no doubt designed directly from a model, and perhaps in rivalry with a eorresponding figure of Barbari's

* Bartsch *P.-gr.* vii. 523, No. 16.

† Bartsch, No. 68.

‡ Bartsch, *P.-gr.* vii. No. 11, "*L'homme portant le berceau*," and No. 10, "*La fileuse*."

§ Bartsch, 85.

in his excellent group of the "Captives." * Dürer has not, however, managed to attain that finely felt fidelity to nature which so favourably distinguishes this engraving of the Italian, although he has recourse to such little naturalistic expedients as showing the hair on the legs.

Dürer displays more freedom in some small engravings, the subjects of which are taken, without any especial intention, directly from life. As an example of this may be mentioned the rustic pair of lovers,† where the peasant youth is talking earnestly with emphatic gesture and uplifted right hand to his stiff and stately companion. It is impossible not to recognise in this one of those skits upon the conceit of the peasantry, which were very much in vogue towards the latter part of the middle ages, especially in the cities. And the same ironical tone, although far removed from caricature, is apparent in the three peasants in conversation,‡ one of whom holds a basket of eggs, and another has a sack thrown over his shoulders, and is leaning upon a somewhat damaged sword; no doubt they are discussing the affairs of the universe. The small engraving of the Virgin and two others § is a simple, homely scene, such as might have been accidentally suggested; indeed, the two women standing in *bourgeois* attire would hardly be recognised for what they are but for the appearance of the Almighty Father in the clouds. The same holds good, in a still higher measure, of the little print of the Virgin suckling the Infant Jesus, of the year 1503‖ where the realism is carried so far as to give Mary a thin, elderly face, more suitable to St. Anne, though there is no reason to think that it is intended for her. This plate shows already

* Bartsch, *P.-gr.* vii. No. 17. Hieronymus Hopfer has, among others, copied the four engravings of Barbari mentioned here.

† Bartsch, 83.

‡ Bartsch, 86.

§ Bartsch, 29.

‖ Bartsch, 34.

a great advance in technical skill; it is delicately and yet deeply cut, so that early impressions appear very dark.* This delicacy in the engraving is carried to the greatest perfection in those earlier prints of Dürer's which are purely the offsprings of his fancy, and in which consequently the peculiar characteristics of his handling met with no restrictions. The symbolical engraving of a man with a flaming countenance, sitting upon a lion, and holding a sword and scales, which has been entitled "Justice,"† and which is probably intended to represent the Judge of the world, is put together at random from a variety of apocalyptic reminiscences.‡ The delicacy of the work in this plate might lead to a mistake being made as to its date; it must, however, be assigned to a period prior to the two wonderfully executed escutcheons on copper, one of which, that with the death's head,§ bears the date 1503. The other escutcheon, of a lion with a cock flapping its wings and crowing above a closed helmet,‖ belongs probably to the same time, and, though not to be compared with the other in depth of invention, is far superior in delicacy of technique. The metallic sheen of the helmet, for instance, is inimitably rendered. All these subjects are on a white background.

The work by which, next to the "Adam and Eve"—sup-

* According to Wessely (*Kupferstich-Sammlung der k. Museen in Berlin*, Leipzig, 1875, p. 56, No. 410), the Museum in Berlin possesses an impression taken before the insertion of the little bare tree with the tablet, on which is the date, hanging from it. It was just at this time that Dürer began to date his engravings.

† Bartsch, 79.

‡ Compare Rev. xix. 12. "His eyes were as a flame of fire." Two of the apocalyptic horsemen carry scales and a sword; the third with the bow is meant to represent the coming of the Messiah. The lion is the symbol of power; in Rev. v. 5, Christ himself is called "the Lion of the tribe of Juda."

§ Bartsch, 101. See above, p. 207.

‖ Bartsch, 100.

posing such to have been the intention of that engraving—Dürer most signally displayed his superiority over Barbari was his "Family of Satyrs," of the year 1505,* also called the "Little Satyr," to distinguish it from the "Jealousy," or "Great Satyr." It far surpasses Jacopo's corresponding engraving, in which the elder of the two Satyrs, a somewhat wooden figure, is playing on the bass-viol, instead of the flute.† Here the figures are no longer upon a white ground, but stand out in the full light against the dark shadows of a forest; the recumbent figure of the woman shows unmistakable signs of having been studied from the life. How popular this subject then was may be gathered from the fact that another Venetian engraver, called "the Master of 1515," twice engraved it in a somewhat different manner. The choice of such a mythological idyl of the forest as a subject possibly owed its origin to Lucian's description of the "Family of Centaurs" by Zeuxis, or at least to some inaccurately transmitted reminiscence of that picture.

The failure of the masters of the Renaissance to exactly distinguish between Centaurs and Satyrs has been already alluded to.‡ There are, besides, points of difference between their compositions and the much-praised work of Zeuxis.§ For instance, in the latter a female Centaur was depicted lying down upon rich green turf, and suckling her twins, while on a height above her stood the father Centaur laughing and holding up in his right hand a young lion, with which he appears to be playfully frightening his little ones. There is, however, another rendering of this scene, which enables us to trace the connection between Barbari's and Dürer's engravings and the passage in Lucian, viz. that

* Bartsch, 69.

† Bartsch, *P.-gr.* vii. 522, No. 11. Also re-engraved by Hieronymus Hopfer.

‡ See above, p. 223.

§ Lucian, *Zeuxis and Antiochus*, chap. 3–7.

by the great Florentine, Sandro Botticelli, who was the first to venture on profane and mythological subjects in painting. His transcript of the Greek painter's work forms a portion of the decorative part of his celebrated picture of "Calumny," in the Uffizii at Florence,* the principal subject of which is also drawn from an account in Lucian of a picture by Apelles, and which is embellished with noble Renaissance architecture and rich ornament. The Centaur family occurs upon the base of the judge's seat, painted in chiaroscuro heightened with gold, and has the effect of a low relief. The only difference between it and Lucian's description is that the female Centaur has three, instead of two, young ones about her, and that they are not represented with horses' bodies like their parents, but merely with goats' legs. Slight as the change is, it shows already an altered conception of the design, and makes it quite possible to believe that the human aspect given to the female Centaur by Dürer and Barbari, and their addition of the father playing music, may only be further deviations from the original.†

It is our ignorance of the channels through which the artist became acquainted with these novel and foreign ideas, and of the changes which they underwent in reaching him, that makes it so difficult to explain many of Dürer's early plates. The task will be easier when we are better conversant with the learned literature of the time, though even then the transition from a few scanty words to the pictorial delineation may present very considerable difficulties. It is

* Catalogue, No. 1182. We shall return to this picture again farther on, in speaking of Dürer's designs for the council chamber.

† The figures in Dürer's picture were surrounded by one of his pupils or followers with an ornamental border of vine tendrils, which forms a pattern for a carpet. The great woodcut called "Dürer's Carpet" is described in Heller, 2104, Passavant, 206, and Retberg, A. 68.

impossible to realise the want of skill which, owing to their being without any antique models to study from, the old German masters displayed at the outset in the treatment of classical and mythological subjects; and for the same reason we are hardly able to recognise their compositions as belonging to this class of subject at all, much less single out with certainty any particular works as examples. For my own part, however, I have no doubt that two other plates of the year 1505, called "The Great Horse" and "The Little Horse,"* are mythological in import, it being no argument to the contrary, that Dürer may at the same time have wished to give proofs of his advance in the study of the horse. "The Great Horse" is a strong cart horse of the same breed, only somewhat heavier, as the winged steed of Barbari's engraving, extremely true to nature, and foreshortened from behind in a masterly manner. It stands, with its halter on, inside a walled enclosure, and in front of a column, on the top of which are visible the feet of a nude deity. Behind the horse, and turned towards its head, as if he were just come to lead it away, stands a man in armour with his helmet on, and holding a halberd. This might possibly be intended to represent Hercules carrying off the mares of the Thracian Diomedes. The exploit is illustrated in just the same kind of way in a woodcut in the 'Mythology' of Johann Herold,† the oldest printed book of the kind in Germany. As in Dürer's plate, there is only one horse, foreshortened from behind, and near it an ordinary-looking man,

* Bartsch, 97 and 96.

† *Die Heydenwelt*, Basle, 1554, p. clxxxi. Quad von Kinkelbach, in the passage cited at p. 203, may have intended by calling the "Envy" the "Great Hercules" to distinguish it from another "little" one; perhaps he referred to "The Great Horse." Compare also the engraving of Hans Sebald Beham (Bartsch, No. 67), where a warrior with a charger is assumed merely from the inscription to be "Alexander the Great" leading Bucephalus towards the sun.

holding it by the rein and switching a whip. Such a simplification of their subject-matter is indeed very usual with the old German masters.

It is more difficult to find out the meaning of the companion plate, "The Little Horse." Here the animal is of a higher breed and more spirited, like the horse in the "St. George" woodcut,* but not so strictly true to nature as the "great one." It is in the act of stepping out to the left and neighing, while behind it stands a man in armour with a halberd, as in the other plate. A basin upon the wall containing burning pitch has probably to do with some pagan superstition. The man has small wings both on his feet and helmet, but only those on the feet are feathered; the others are like a night moth's. Despite, however, this fantastic alteration, Dürer must have intended him to represent Mercury. But then what has Mercury to do with horses? It is really impossible to say. Perhaps, though it seems going beyond the extreme limits of conjectural explanation, there is merely some confusion here in the shapes of the animals, and just as the Centaurs became Satyrs, the oxen of Apollo have assumed in the imagination of the artist the form of the horses of the sun. It may be, too, that the master allowed himself this to us somewhat startling poetic licence, because the representation of an ox had no interest for him, and, as there is reason to believe, was not within the range of his studies. That Dürer was at this time in search of new material, evidently of a mythological character, and that he was encouraged to do so by the advice of learned friends, may be gathered from the following passage in a letter from Venice to Wilibald Pirkheimer, of August 28:—"As for historical works, I do not see that the Italians produce

* Bartsch, 111.

anything particular, or which could be of use to you in your studies. It is always the same thing. You yourself know more than there is in their paintings."*

But apart from the bearing which these three engravings of 1505 may have on the question of his selection of subjects, they are of importance from an artistic point of view, as showing, in conjunction with the "Adam and Eve" of 1504, what enormous progress Dürer had made. In point of technique, they stand on the same level with that masterpiece, and have, in fact, the same object in view, viz. to bring out the principal figures with the utmost possible delicacy from a dark background into the strongest light, or, to speak more correctly, to make them stand out distinctly from a background in deep shadow. No one before had aimed at such a pictorial effect, either in engraving or in mere black and white drawings. At the same time, Dürer's rapid progress in the study of nature is shown in the forms of the horses, more so, perhaps, than in the human forms. Just compare the horses of 1505 with the horse in the St. Eustace. And then, again, of those two, the "Great Horse" is far better, and therefore certainly of a later date, than the "Little Horse." How much Dürer at that time was taken up with the study of the horse is shown by his having already in 1505 designed the "St. George on Horseback," and begun to engrave it.† The plate was left unfinished, either on account of his departure on his travels, or because he was dissatisfied with the result, and was not completed till 1508, when, as we shall see, he had acquired fresh theoretical knowledge on the subject in Italy. Nothing, indeed, is more truly characteristic of the quality of Dürer's mind than this tendency in his

* *Dürers Briefe*, pp. 14 and 191.

† Bartsch, 54. It is easy to see that the last figure of the date on this engraving was originally a 5, and was afterwards altered to an 8.

study of art always to search for theoretical prineiples. He even thought of writing a book upon the "Proportions of the Horse," similar to his work upon those of the human body.*

Nature, however, is his prineipal guide, even in the representation of the human body. He devoted himself to studying a variety of details, "for," as he says, "from many beautiful things one eollects something good, just as honey is gathered from many flowers"; without, too, falling into that exaggerated eclecticism whieh has been ascribed to Zeuxis. Although at first a believer in Barbari's theories, he afterwards forsook him, evidently in mistrust of his pretended canon, the extreme limit of the separation being reaehed in the "Great Fortune." From that time he endeavoured to fathom for himself the laws of human proportion. But he did this only by a continual and elose investigation of nature, and it sounds like a far-off eeho of his controversy with Barbari when, in one of the notes for his 'Treatise on Proportion,' he says:—"But some are of another opinion; they say how men ought to be. This I will not argue with them about; but I esteem nature as the master in this matter, and the conjecture of men as error. The Creator made men once for all as they should be, and I believe that correctness of form and truc beauty are to be found in the human race as a whole. Whoever can find the truth there, I would rather follow him than one who seeks to invent a new artificial measure of proportion in whieh nature has had no part."† The boundary line is here plainly marked out at whieh the German and the Italian masters cease to understand each other. Raphael writes in his letter to the Count Baldassare Castiglione concern-

* Zahn, *Die Dürerhandschriften des Brit. Museums*, in the *Jahrb. für Kunstw.* i. 12, note.

† Zahn, *Dürerhandschriften des Brit. Museums*, in the *Jahrb. für Kunstw.* i. 8.

ing his Galatea "that, to paint one beautiful woman, he must see many."* But if these were lacking, he found another expedient; he made use with success of "a certain idea," which he thought, without knowing it positively, possessed the artistic excellencies he had taken so much trouble to arrive at.† In this flight the German realist cannot follow the Italian. Dürer believed that it was only by the aid of knowledge and experience that he could lift himself above nature. To him Raphael's "certain idea" would probably have appeared as "a new artificial measure of proportion."

Toilsome indeed was the path by which Dürer pursued his researches, and sought to sound nature to her very depths. It may have been a roundabout or a wrong way; but the choice of it was determined by causes that lay deeply grounded in his very being, and in the circumstances surrounding him. In spite of all hindrances, he followed out his own special line without wavering; and great are the results he has achieved therein, and greater still those which he hoped to prepare for posterity, although he must have seen how Italian taste and its ideal formalism, which he had once admired in Barbari, and had afterwards fought against, were more and more attaining universal predominance.

Yet once more, when at the height of his fame, was Dürer destined to come across the shadow of his old rival, and in some measure to be driven out of the field by him. On the 7th of June 1521, he visited Jacopo's last patroness, the archduchess Margaret, regent of the Netherlands, at her residence at Mechlin, bringing with him, for

* Bottari, *Raccolta di Lettere*, i. 116; Passavant, *Raphael*, i. 533: "che per depingere una bella, mi bisogneria veder più belle."

† "Ma essendo carestia e di buoni guidici, e di belle donne, io mi servo di certa idea, che mi viene nella mente. Se questa ha in se alcuna eccellenza d'arte, io non so; ben m'affatico d'averla."

her inspection and acceptance, a portrait which he had painted of her imperial father Maximilian. "But as she had such a dislike to it, I took it away again with me," he says, very ingenuously. In return, Margaret showed him "nearly forty little pictures in oil colours, the like of which, at once for delicacy and excellence, I have never seen." She also showed him other fine paintings by Jan van Eyck and Jacopo dei Barbari, and a little book of sketches by the latter, which must have excited Dürer's warm admiration, as he begged the princess for it. But she had already promised it to her painter, Bernhard van Orley.*

* Campe, *Reliquien*, 135. Thausing, *Dürers Briefe, Tagebücher und Reime* 126 and 236.

CHAPTER XI.

THE SECOND RESIDENCE IN VENICE.

"I became a gentleman at Venice."—DÜRER.

GENERALLY speaking, a man's biography is arranged according to the eventful or remarkable circumstances in his career; and in the case of artists, whose lives are often unmarked by any great changes, we look for some cardinal points in their travels, such as may reasonably be supposed to have exercised a direct influence upon their genius. This is especially true of both those journeys of Dürer's which led him into the two chief homes of modern painting, and of which he has himself left so valuable an account. And yet we should be wrong in attributing to Dürer's stay at Venice in 1506, or to the Netherlands journey of 1520, any remarkable change in his style. In both instances the conclusion of a decisive period in his development preceded these journeys.

Ten years had elapsed since Dürer went to Venice to study, when, having taken his own measure and compared himself with others, and feeling fully convinced of his own powers, he returned there. In that interval he had wrestled sorely after truth, and had striven, as only an artist's soul could, to give embodiment to what was highest and best;

and the crisis which raised him suddenly to complete independence, and showed him clearly his artistic mission, took place precisely in the year 1503, without being at all connected with any particular event in his outward life. It is indeed possible that the death of his father at the end of the previous year, which very much affected Dürer, may have been to some extent the occasion of his being thrown back upon himself. But, on the whole, the transformation and deepening of his being was a process which took place within, amidst those mental storms which inspired natures at times have to weather before they can gather up and purify all their powers; and, as often happens, too, this psychical evolution was accompanied in Dürer's case by bodily illness.

The way in which Dürer, whose delicate constitution caused him afterwards a great deal of suffering, speaks of this his first illness gives us the key to the crowning epoch of his life. In the British Museum there is a charcoal drawing of the head, seen from below and much foreshortened, of the dead Saviour, with the crown of thorns, the mouth open, the eyes closed, and the whole face wearing a terrible expression of agony. It bears the monogram and the date 1503, both well preserved, and beneath them an inscription of which the only words that remain are: "*D angesicht hab ich gemacht in meiner kranckheit*" —"I did this face during my illness." From his own feelings of pain Dürer seeks to arrive at the expression of the suffering Christ; a decided step this towards depicting with the pencil the emotions of the soul, and towards a dramatic treatment of the features; an open recognition, in fact, of that realism which conceives of the highest and the godlike as existing only in complete and true humanity. Dürer at this time becomes prominent in various ways. From the intellectual crisis which took place in his

thirty-second year, he rises with the strength of a giant, and a decade of activity follows, the fulness and variety of which become more astonishing the farther we follow it and try to understand it.

Hitherto Dürer had contented himself with reproducing the human countenance in its set forms of repose, in the same objective manner as he would mirror, so to say, plants, animals, landscapes, or other outward objects. In all the portraits of his earlier time there is that momentary fixed stare, that anxious suppression of all visible signs of emotion, and that outwardly set, determined look which inevitably comes over the features of every sitter. This expression shows itself more or less in all the German portraits of the fifteenth century, and tends largely to give them a look of naïve abstraction. It is in the year 1503 that we first meet with portrait studies of Dürer's which show an entirely new quality of conception. From that date henceforth a creative breath seems to have infused life and animation into the work, always true to nature: the hair moves, the eyes glisten and twinkle, and the lips tremble in an indescribable way. Besides this head of Christ, the British Museum possesses a charcoal head of a man in a turban, yawning; and Herr Alfred von Franck, of Gratz, has a head of the Virgin with a soft and singularly noble expression. A similar head, life-size, in charcoal, and looking down from under a veil, which, by its long oval features and enchanting smile, recalls Leonardo's Milanese type of woman, is in the Berlin Cabinet, as well as another, of a young woman, with heavily drooping eyelids. In the Kunsthalle at Bremen there is a remarkable head, nearly life-size, in silver point, of a lovely female, with bare throat, and hair tied back over the forehead with a ribbon and fastened behind. Although she is laughing so as to show both rows of teeth, there is no unpleasant grimace about the mouth; one only longs to

laugh with this gay and lusty German Mona Lisa Gioconda. A silver point drawing belonging to Mr. Locker, of London,* of a young man looking out with sly composure from under a curly head of hair, belongs to the same class of heads, all of which bear the date 1503, and are for the most part executed in charcoal or pencil. To them may be added the long series of similar studies of heads, among which the numerous apostle types sought out by Dürer with such loving preference hold the first place. Only two other silver point drawings, both in the former Hausmann collection, now belonging to Dr. Blasius, at Brunswick, remain to be noticed. One is the unfortunately damaged portrait of Dürer's wife, dated 1504;† and the other the profile sketch of his friend Pirkheimer, belonging to the same period. Here, in a few strokes, we have before us to the life the joyous philosopher of Nuremberg, as he used to be in his prime, when feasting his learned comrades, and seasoning the entertainment with broad jokes, one of which is written on the portrait, probably in his own hand, in Greek—as good as it is obscene.‡

The life-like air, the, as it were, spiritual atmosphere, which hover round features thus rapidly dashed off are too evanescent to be found in a painted or engraved portrait, where much has to be sacrificed to the claims of minute technique. But this deeper sense of feeling in portraiture is the basis of modern historical painting; for once be able to portray in the human countenance the emotions of the

* Burlington Fine Arts Club Catalogue, 1869, No. 151.

† See above, p. 144, and the initial letter of Chapter VI.

‡ See, in the *Jahrb. für Kunstw.* iii. 240 et seq., my notice of Lochner's *Personennamen in A. Durers Briefen.* The inscription, which cannot be translated here, written at the same time and with the same pencil, runs thus: Ἀρσένος τῇ ψωλῇ ἐς τὸν πρωκτόν. This drawing proves also that the portrait of 1505, in the Borghese Gallery in Rome, is no more Pirkheimer's likeness than it is Dürer's painting.



PORTRAIT OF WILIBALD PIRKHEIMER.

(*From the Silver-point Drawing, executed in* 1504, *in the collection of Dr. Blasius at Brunswick.*)

To face p. 322, Vol. I.

soul and the thoughts that animate the will, and the bodies in a picture will readily lend themselves to the design which unites them in a dramatic whole. In this power of depicting expression in the countenance lies the key to that inexhaustible wealth in composition which moved the Lombard painter Lomazzo to exclaim, "Dürer alone has more invention than all the other masters put together."*

Dürer gradually forsook the allegorical and mythological subjects in which he had for a time delighted, and lavished the whole wealth of his productive fancy on popular themes taken from the Bible. Like everything that springs from the soul's inmost depths, the originality of his scenes from the life of Christ did not fail to produce a powerful effect upon his contemporaries, not excepting the Italian masters. His copper and wood engravings soon found their way to Italy, and spread his fame there; the landscape backgrounds in particular of his earliest plates attracting the Italians so much that they borrowed them to adorn their own compositions.† Of the wood engravings, on the other hand, they did not so much appreciate the more severe early ones of the time of the 'Apocalypse' as those of a subsequent date, in

* *Trattato*, lib. v. cap. 2.

† Thus, the landscape of the Virgin with the locust (Bartsch, 44), has been reproduced in the St. Ottilia attributed to Campagnola (Bartsch, xv. 539); the whole background of the Great Hercules (Bartsch, 73), has been copied by Robetta (Bartsch, 24); the castle in the same plate has been combined with that of the St. Eustace (Bartsch, 57) by Agostino Veneziano (Bartsch, 409), where also the ship from the Amymone (Bartsch, 71) is introduced; while the so-called Mare Antonio (Bartsch, 484) contains the group of trees and the whole of the left part of the landscape from the Great Hercules. See too above, p. 220, note.* An early statement by Wimpheling, that Dürer's pictures were exported to Italy, rests on a misunderstanding; he says of Dürer, "Nurenbergae imagines absolutissimas depingit, quae a mercatoribus in Italiam transportantur et illic a probatissimis pictoribus non minus probantur quam Parrhasii et Apellis tabulae." Grimm, *Ueber Küntsler*, ii. 224. There were no other Latin words for engraving and woodcut but *imago*, *pictura*. No doubt, too, the pictures of Schongauer, which were sent abroad, were only engravings.

which the freedom of drawing and harmony of composition show that Dürer had reached the climax of his artistic power. This may be called the middle period of Dürer's career, when his style was at its best, and it is important for us to understand that it began much earlier than is generally supposed—namely, before his second stay in Venice.

Consequently it becomes necessary to modify the opinion hitherto held on this point, especially so far as the 'Great Passion' is concerned. Because this series of twelve large wood engravings in a book was published in 1511, and four of them are dated 1510, it has been assumed that they were all done at that time.* This is quite a mistake, however; for the series obviously divides into two unequal halves, one of which comprises the four engravings dated and the title-page, which is undoubtedly of the same year, whilst the other, consisting of seven woodcuts, is about ten years older. Dürer must have taken in hand the designing and drawing of the earlier pieces soon after the completion of his Apocalypse. The figures, it is true, are larger and more powerful, but their crowded arrangement and passionate gestures, together with the harshness of the forms and the sharp, abruptly defined hatching, put one a good deal in mind of the Apocalypse. The engraving of the blocks, which are unusually large, is not so good, being in parts coarse and rough, and done with too much force; from which it may be inferred that they were executed at a time when Dürer no longer supervised with the same care this technical part of the work. It came at length to an entire standstill, owing perhaps to the master's growing dissatisfaction with the results, or, what is still more likely, to motives of economy. As soon as

* Retberg, p. 67, Nos. 174–185; Bartsch, Nos. 4–15.

Dürer had entered, under more favourable auspices, upon the publication of the 'Life of the Virgin,' and the 'Little Passion,' he returned to this unfinished work and rapidly completed it by the addition of sundry new blocks and the title-page.

Any attempt to construct a chronological order for the seven older sheets of the 'Great Passion' must always give rise to controversy, and I shall therefore content myself with assigning them broadly to somewhere about 1500. They represent the following subjects. "Jesus on the Mount of Olives," * his body bent, and hands stretched out deprecatingly, as though to put away the cup presented to him by the angel; the sleeping attitude of the three apostles in the foreground is vividly rendered, and the figure of St. Peter on the left has the lean form and bold foreshortening of an angel of the Apocalypse. "The Flagellation" † seems to have inspired the engraver with the same wild feelings that are conspicuous in the composition, for his knife has played sad havoc with Dürer's design. "The Ecce Homo" ‡ is far better engraved. Here Christ appears in the touching attitude of suffering to be found in pictures of an early date, under the portal of a handsome building in the late Gothic style; the figures of the Pharisees below are admirable in character; and so too especially is the martial-looking foot-soldier on the extreme right. "The Bearing the Cross" § is perhaps the most remarkable composition of the whole series. In it Dürer was the first to adopt from Schongauer's large engraving the motive of Christ sinking on his knees; and this attitude, with one arm grasping the cross, the other supporting his weight on a stone, as he turns his head back towards the holy women, while a soldier drags him

* Bartsch, No. 6.
† Bartsch, No. 8.
‡ Bartsch, No. 9.
§ Bartsch, No. 10.

along by a rope, has become a model for subsequent representations of the same scene. In "The Crucifixion"* the figures of the upper and lower half of the composition are so different in character as to suggest the probability of the latter, with its noble group around the fainting Virgin, having been either added some years later or else considerably altered. The two winged angels in the upper half, who are collecting the blood of the Saviour in chalices, seem to have flown there out of the Apocalypse; and the sun and moon, the heavenly witnesses, have, in accordance with the early Christian fashion, human faces. "The Bewailing the Dead Christ,"† both in the composition and in the meagre and sunken forms of the corpse, closely resembles the two school pictures of the same subject at Munich and Nuremberg. "The Entombment"‡ derives its effect from the deep feeling shown in the details, the *ensemble* and the engraving leaving much to be desired.

From the year 1503 Dürer bids farewell to the traditional, over-exaggerated manner of representing the scenes of the Passion; as a consequence, the size of the blocks is diminished, and fewer principal figures are introduced into the composition, which thus becomes at times a simple episode, while its effect is heightened by a milder and often highly poetical conception of the tragedy. These new ideas first develop themselves in the so-called 'Green Passion,' the name given to a series of twelve drawings in the Albertina, portraying the sufferings of Christ, with an introductory plate of "The Adoration of the Kings," all carefully drawn in chiaroscuro with pen and pencil, on a green prepared ground, and bearing, some of them in two places, the date 1504.§ This 'Green Passion' is quite equal to any subse-

* Bartsch, No. 11.
† Bartsch, No. 13.
‡ Bartsch, No. 12.
§ The contradictory dates on Pili-

quent series of copper or wood engravings. If it surpasses them at times in expression and delicacy of feeling, it is owing to the chiaroscuro, and also to the fact of the drawing not having been spoilt by an engraver. The compositions recall sometimes one, sometimes another plate of the published series, though no one is actually repeated. In many cases they probably served as preliminary studies: the "Christ before Pilate," for instance, may have been a sketch for the engraving on copper of the same subject.* On the other hand, "The Bearing the Cross" is only a further development of the celebrated cut in the 'Great Passion;' † and the same with "The Entombment." The well-balanced and attractive design of "The Descent from the Cross" has always justly been the object of admiration. Very remarkable, too, is the massive architecture, with its round arches, which occurs in some of the drawings of the 'Green Passion,' and which, in spite of certain eccentricities, is probably taken from the antique. In "The Flagellation" Christ is bound to a fluted pillar, the capital of which is composed of a volute and indistinct foliage. What care Dürer took with these Passion pictures is proved by the pen sketches which we possess for several of them. In the Albertina are those for the "Christ before Pilate," and "The Crowning with Thorns"; in the Uffizii is one for "The Descent from the Cross"; and in the Ambrosian Gallery at Milan there is one for "The Capture," and another for "The Flagellation," besides a design for a "Christ on the Mount of Olives," which would appear to have been done with the same object, but was not used, Jesus only being represented in the same attitude—kneeling with uplifted arms—as in the copper engraving, while the three slumber-

zotti's lithographs are due to inaccurate reading, and might easily mislead investigators like Waagen, Kugler, and others, into erroneous assumptions.

* Bartsch, No. 7. † Bartsch, No. 10.

ing apostles are differently rendered. We must not forget either the large "Calvary" in the Uffizii,* a drawing dated 1505, full of figures, and executed in the same style as the 'Green Passion.' Though protected by a cover, on which is a careful copy by Jan Breughel, it has become very dark. It has been engraved by Jacob Matham; and a slight pen sketch for the groups in the lower part is to be found in the former Posonyi-Hullot collection† now at Berlin.

The date of all these drawings being beyond dispute, there is no difficulty in concluding that the celebrated series of wood engravings called the 'Life of the Virgin' were mostly done in the years 1504 and 1505, with the exception only of the last three cuts and the title-page. Although each impression covers an entire sheet of paper, the blocks are much smaller than those of the 'Apocalypse' and the 'Great Passion'; and the figures are also diminished in proportion, so that there is a larger space above them for the development of the landscape and the architecture, which adds very much to the effect of the compositions. The engraving, too, shows a great improvement as compared with that of the early sheets of the 'Great Passion,' a proof that Dürer was again turning increased attention to technical execution, which for some years he had neglected. Its evenness and completeness here have an uncommonly good effect.

The story begins with "The Refusal of Joachim's Offering by the High-priest."‡ The utter abasement of the rejected, childless man is very vividly portrayed both in his attitude and in the countenances of the bystanders. Behind, and over the curtain, in the background, is seen the sanctuary—a hall with round arches and a groined roof. Next comes

* Catalogue, No. 864. † Catalogue, No. 338. ‡ Bartsch, 77.

"The Angel appearing to Joachim in the Wilderness" * with the glad tidings, which are conveyed to the enraptured recipient in the form of a sealed document with the seals hanging from it. The astonished shepherds stand gazing at the scene, while all around spreads a wide glorious landscape. The third cut represents "Joachim and Anna embracing under the Golden Gate," † the round arch of which is richly decorated with Gothic tendrils and leaves, and small statues of the patriarchs; through the opening can be seen a farm and mountainous landscape. ‡

"The Birth of the Virgin" § is a complete and characteristic picture of a Nuremberg family of the day, and but for the angel hovering above, swinging a censer, there would be nothing in it at all suggestive of the sacred story. The scene of disorder in the spacious lying-in chamber is just what the presence of the eleven gossips, neighbours, and other women anxious to render assistance, would lead one to expect. Refreshments are being handed to the mother, the child is being placed in a bath, and a mighty beer jug is guarantee that the good housewives will not soon tire of discussing what to them is an inexhaustible subject. In "The Presentation in the Temple" ‖ we see Mary, now three years old, hastening up the steps of the portico, where the high-priest awaits her. As the vestibule of the Temple is meant to be antique, several fantastic low reliefs are introduced into the rich architecture. Over the gateway in the background is the statue of a mythological hunter, holding in one hand a captured animal, in the other the handle of a pitch-pan. The lower part of the slender columns which support the staircase is bulb-shaped. "The

* Bartsch, No. 78.

† Bartsch, No 79.

‡ The pen drawing, turned the same way, in the Albertina, is an exact copy of the engraving.

§ Bartsch, No. 80. ‖ Bartsch, No 81.

Espousals of Mary and Joseph"* are being celebrated by the high-priest, in front of a round-arched portal, richly ornamented with a Gothic network of twigs and tendrils, among which are seen figures of knights and naked men on lions and unicorns fighting. In the sanctuary behind can be seen a row of columns, the capitals of which, ornamented with foliage, support a high-pitched, vaulted roof. The timid bride, with her transparent veil and long ermine-lined sleeves, is naturally of the true Nuremberg type, as is also her attendant in the high headdress, with which we have already become acquainted.† "The Annunciation"‡ takes place, not in a small room, but in a hall open to the air, the wide round arches of which are secured with clamps, let in over the chamfered impost. In the tympanum of one of the arches there is a medallion with a half-length figure of Judith. "The Visitation,"§ on the other hand, has afforded the artist an opportunity of introducing a charming mountain landscape, reaching far away into the distance. In the foreground the two women are embracing; while under the gateway on the left appears Zacharias with troubled visage, his hat held in his hand, and in front of him the half shaved poodle, which Dürer so often delighted to introduce into his pictures. A slight design for this engraving sketched in reverse with the pen is in the Albertina at Vienna.

"The Nativity"‖ shows us a ruined stable, beneath the shelter of which is lying the Holy Child in a cradle, adored by His mother, and surrounded by a crowd of admiring angels; Joseph, on high wooden clogs, and holding a lantern, approaches on the left, and on the right are the shepherds. "The Circumcision"¶ is performed in the middle of the crowd that throng the synagogue, among whom are several

* Bartsch, No. 82. † See above, p. 142. ‡ Bartsch, No. 83.
§ Bartsch, No. 84. ‖ Bartsch, No. 85. ¶ Bartsch, No. 86.

admirably characteristic figures; on the upper part of the arcade, in the background, is again to be seen Gothic tracery with figures of Moses and Judith. "The Adoration of the Kings" * is an admirable composition. The stable has here assumed the appearance of a ruined castle. On the dilapidated stonework sits the Virgin, her head inclined gracefully on one side, and her dignified features expressive of joyful emotion. The Child sits in her lap, and turns with a half playful, half gracious and assuring manner to the royal seer kneeling before Him with folded hands and chin gravely bowed upon his breast. The second king stops in the act of presenting the goblet in his hand, in order to give a nod of encouragement to the third, a Moor, who approaches shyly, and is about to bend on one knee. The figure of Joseph, on the right, holding one of the gifts in his hand, and gazing curiously and cautiously over the Virgin's shoulder at the kings, is very successful. In the background are the retinue of the kings and two shepherds, while in the air hover three angels chanting the "*Gloria.*" This subject was always a favourite with Dürer's predecessors, especially the Low Country masters, but nowhere has it been so felicitously treated as in this simple woodcut. So cleverly arranged are the figures, each one animated with some distinctive expression, and yet all in harmony with one another, that they seem united by a kind of inherent necessity. Despite the scanty resources of the medium employed, the action is thoroughly wrought out even in the smallest details, while not only does the key-note of the picture accord with the class of ideas from which the subject is taken, but it goes further and touches the most general sentiments of humanity; nothing is arbitrary, and nothing superfluous. Only the greatest masters like

* Bartsch, No. 87.

Masaccio or Leonardo, understood how to infuse such abundance of strength into their compositions, and to put such life into the creations of their fancy, that the ideal relation between the various actors in the scene is more clearly placed before the spectator than it could be in actual life.

In "The Presentation in the Temple"* we see with surprise inside the Temple, and quite unconnected with it, an entablature supported by massive columns with flat bases and vine-leaf capitals. The object of this is not very plain; the idea of it was probably taken from some theoretical studies in old books only half understood. "The Flight into Egypt"† has been very much inspired by Martin Schongauer's engraving, even in such details as the palm-tree and the other tropical plants, and the figure of the small ass. The most charming design of all is undoubtedly "The Repose in Egypt,"‡ in which we are shown the parents of Jesus living by their labour. In an open court-yard, from which is seen a hilly landscape, Joseph is at work at his carpentering. The chips of wood are being collected in a basket by boy angels, one of whom has playfully cocked the master's hat upon his little head, while others are amusing themselves with toys. Joseph himself is just pausing from his work, and gazing thoughtfully, axe in hand, at the group formed by the young mother and the Child, as she sits happy with her distaff and spindle beside His cradle. Angels press round them with interest, and admire Mary's work, while one brings her flowers. In the heavens appears a half-figure of God the Father in the attitude of blessing. It is a picture of the purest domestic bliss, a bliss which compensates the poor exiles even for their home. All through his 'Life of the Virgin,'

* Bartsch, No. 88. † Bartsch, No. 89. ‡ Bartsch, No. 90.

Dürer has touched very powerfully one chord of German feeling. It is, in fact, the apotheosis of family life, with the whole fulness of divine approval outpoured upon it. In it the painter preaches the new ethics that Luther afterwards declared in joyful accents to his fellow-countrymen when he said that marriage was "the most excellent estate on earth," and that there existed "no companionship more full of love, of friendship, and of bliss, than a happy wedded life." *

"Jesus disputing with the Doctors in the Temple" † is a mere collection of figures in different attitudes expressive of learned arrogance, and a sense of superior knowledge. The deferential manner of Mary and Joseph, as they come upon the scene, forms a striking contrast to the learned greybeards' stiff, unbending attitude. "The Leave-taking of Jesus and His Mother before His Last Journey to Jerusalem" ‡ has in it something very attractive. As He turns to go, full of majesty and high resolve, He once again blesses the aged mother, who, wringing her hands in despair at the fate that awaits Him, sinks down upon the threshold of the door. Anything more grand than this poet never imagined, nor painter limned.

'The Life of the Virgin' was finished thus far when Dürer undertook his second journey to Venice, the object of which, according to Vasari, was an action arising out of the piracy of that work.§ Putting aside many evident mistakes of Vasari's and simply comparing his statements with the

* A. Woltman, "*Zu Dürers Gedächtniss*" (*National-Zeitung*, 1871, No. 236). There is a fuller description of the 'Life of the Virgin,' in Eye's *Leben A. Dürers*, 280, 319, and in the catalogues of Bartsch, Heller, and Retberg.

† Bartsch, No. 91.

‡ Bartsch, No. 92.

§ Vasari, ed. Le Monnier, ix. 267. It is clear that either he or his informant mistook the 'Life of the Virgin,' for the 'Little Passion,' done later; but this does not impeach his credibility.

facts, the truth of the matter appears to be that, when Dürer received the intelligence of Marc Antonio having engraved his 'Life of the Virgin,' at Venice, line for line, on copper, he went there in high indignation to summon the Bolognese artist before the Signoria, and that the suit resulted in giving Marc Antonio the right of copying Dürer's woodcuts in all but the monogram, which was to be omitted. And, as a matter of fact, the copies completed later by Marc Antonio of the 'Little Passion' had no monogram, but only an empty tablet, which he often afterwards substituted for his own monogram and used as equivalent to it.

For a long time Vasari's account was regarded as a purely groundless fable, partly owing to the various inaccuracies it contained, but chiefly because Dürer having only published 'The Life of the Virgin,' as well as 'The Little Passion,' as a book, in 1511, after the Venetian journey, a copy of the former by Marc Antonio of an earlier date was deemed simply impossible. And this idea derived support from the persistent way in which the date on the cut of the meeting of Joachim and Anna under the Golden Gate, which is clearly enough 1504, was misread 1509. As, however, we know that 'The Life of the Virgin,' with the exception of two or at most three sheets, belongs to the earlier date, and that some of the designs and studies indeed were done even before that period, Vasari's statement loses much of its improbability. It is true that I have searched the Venetian archives in vain for any trace of the lawsuit mentioned by him; but this is not to be wondered at considering the great gaps there are in the documents relating to this question.

The charming copper engraving of "The Nativity,"*

* Bartsch, 2.

entitled by Dürer himself "Christmas Day," breathes the same atmosphere as 'The Life of the Virgin,' and might well belong to it; it is, in fact, another blossom from the same stem. We have a view of the courtyard of a German house, beneath the open portico of which on the left kneels the Virgin in adoration of the Infant Christ; while in the centre of the court Joseph is occupied in drawing water from a well. Through the round-arched gateway in the background is seen a distant landscape, with the Angel of the Annunciation hovering in the air. From the top of the building projects a pole, with a tablet hanging from it bearing the monogram and the date 1504. The execution of this engraving is less striking than that of the "Adam and Eve," of the same date, but quite as delicate and careful.

When Dürer went to Venice in 1505, sixteen out of the twenty blocks of 'The Life of the Virgin' were ready for printing, and no doubt he took some impressions with him for sale. In two of the seventeen copies by Marc Antonio, namely, "The Annunciation" and "The Adoration of the Kings," there actually is, though small and indistinct, the date 1506. Those left uncopied by him, in addition to the title-page, are the two last but one, "The Death of the Virgin," and "The Assumption," both of which were designed by Dürer at the same time. The slight pen drawing for "The Death of the Virgin," in reverse of the engraving, is in the Albertina. A drawing of "The Assumption," outlined with the pen, and filled in with the point of the brush, in the British Museum, bears the date 1503,* and, though somewhat wider, it evidently belonged to the series of designs for these wood engravings. But these two subjects were not drawn by Dürer on wood

* Waagen, *Treasures of Art*, i. 233.

till the year 1510, and could not, consequently, have been copied by Marc Antonio in 1506.

The last cut of the series, the charming "Adoration of the Virgin and Child by Saints and Angels," * which probably did not originally belong to it, Marc Antonio must have copied later, for his engraving does not bear Dürer's but his own monogram, large and distinct. Besides, this copy is, singularly enough, not engraved on a separate plate, but on the reverse side of the sixteenth plate, as can be seen by examining the plate itself, which is still preserved, with others of Marc Antonio's in a private collection in Italy. Even supposing we do not admit that these copies were the occasion of Dürer's journey to Venice, it is at any rate extremely unlikely that, once there, he would look quietly on at the reproduction of his engravings, with his monogram attached to them. On the contrary, he most probably appealed to the protection of the Signoria, more especially as he had to suffer from the jealousy of the Venetian painters, who cited him three times before that body, until he paid four florins to their *Scuola* or Guild.†

At home Dürer always watched zealously over his proprietary rights, particularly in his wood-engravings, which as being the most easily pirated, he continually had to protect against copyists and imitators. The council of Nuremberg did not refuse him its aid, but its prohibition only applied to the fraudulent use of his monogram. A decree of January 3, 1512, runs thus:—"Item. A stranger who has sold prints in front of the Rathhaus, amongst which are some bearing the mark of Albert Dürer, copied fraudulently, must engage on oath to remove all these marks, and to sell no work of the kind here. In case of contravention all these prints shall be seized and confiscated

* Bartsch, No. 95. † *Dürers Briefe*, p. 11.

as spurious. Given on the Saturday after the Circumcision. 1512."* This prohibition was, without doubt, called forth by a complaint of Dürer's, who did not fail to append to his illustrated books, and amongst them to 'The Life of the Virgin,' the warning—"Woe to you! thieves and imitators of other people's labour and talents; beware of laying your audacious hand upon this our work"; and so on. He further records a privilege granted to him by Maximilian, "that no one should be allowed to print these engravings from counterfeit plates." Perhaps Marc Antonio is included in those Venetian painters of whom Dürer writes on February 7, 1506: "Many are hostile to me here, and copy my work in the churches, and wherever they can meet with it." For it must not be supposed that this remark refers to his paintings, but to his copper and wood engravings, which were sold at the church-doors or hung up by the devout as votive offerings inside. "Afterwards," Dürer adds, "they find fault with it, and say it is not like antique art, and therefore not good"—a reproach which the Venetians had as much right to make against the German master as the Florentines and other Italians, especially Vasari, against them.

The assured, calm indifference to opinion that underlies these few words becomes quite intelligible when we realise that Dürer, as the practised master of the two 'Passions' and 'The Life of the Virgin,' had already reached the summit of his artistic skill; and this, too, in 1504, for everything great that he was destined to accomplish in the domain of religious art is contained in the works of that year. After feeling his way long and anxiously between tradition and nature, he had found a language fitted to express the deepest feelings of his soul, and with a mighty

* Campe, *Reliquien*, 183. Baader, *Beiträge*, i. 10, where the date is corrected.

effort he drew together within one harmonious circle the opposite poles of that disturbed age, its faith and its knowledge. The full stream of Christian feeling and devotion was poured by him into a thousand new forms, taken from the life, and of which German sentiment alone could appreciate the full depth and meaning. The stepping-stones of the Italian Renaissance, the lightly tied leading-strings of the antique, were discarded and thrown aside, and unaided he reached that perfect and matchless manner of representing scenes of sacred history which has since become typical, and in which the whole modern world has found profit and edification.

There were sufficient reasons for Dürer's second journey to Venice in the outbreak of a severe epidemic or plague at Nuremberg about the middle of the year 1505, a circumstance which in those days often led to emigration and constant change of abode, and in his wish to make money by the sale of his works and by obtaining advantageous commissions in a fresh place. Besides his copper and wood engravings, Dürer speaks of six small pictures which he took with him for sale to Venice; and while at his departure he is in debt to Pirkheimer, he is able on his return to discharge the debt, and to take a comparatively favourable view of the state of his finances.* We learn, too, on the same authority, that he had lost some works through the death in Rome of a colporteur to whom they had been entrusted, a proof that he could already reckon upon a market in Italy.

A very definite reason, however, for Dürer's second journey to Venice is to be found, with considerable probability, in the project for rebuilding the *Fondaco dei Tedeschi*, about which the archives of the republic† still give us in-

* *Dürers Briefe*, 7, 136, and 239. See above, p. 149.

† Senato I.—R. 15, Terra, fol. 65 and 67.

formation. The German exchange, near the Ponte Rialto, was burnt down in the winter of the year 1504–5. On June 10, the senate determined to at once set to work and rebuild it on an enlarged scale, and on the 19th of the same month a meeting of the Signoria was held to examine the plans submitted, when, as there was no great difference between them, it chose, at the instance of the German merchants, one made by a countryman of theirs, named Hieronymus, a clever and accomplished man.* It was further resolved that none of the marble or expensive work was to be restored, but that the materials of the new building were to be confined to rough unhewn stone.† It is well known how, in spite of this prohibition, the committee of the German factory took care that the outer walls of the new Fondaco should be covered with frescoes by Giorgione and Titian, of which unfortunately as good as nothing now remains.‡

The Fondaco dei Tedeschi forms a plain, three-storied quadrangle, with cloisters or arcades running round the

* "Havendo se cum diligentia visti e ben examinati i modeli del Fontego de' Tedeschi apresentadi à la Signoria nostra et considera non esser gran differentia de spessa da l' una a l' altro: l' è ben conveniente satisfar a la grande instantia facta per li mercadanti di esso Fontego, quali dovendo esser quelli, che lo hano ad galder et fruir, hano supplicato se vogli tuor el modello fabricado per uno de i suo, nominato Hieronymo, homo intelligente et practico, per esser non mancho de ornamento de questa cita et utele de la Signoria nostra, che comodo ad loro, si per la nobel et ingeniosa compositione et constructione de quello, come etiam per la quantita et qualita de le camere, magaçeni, uolte et botege, se farano in esso, de le qual tute se traçera ogni anno de afficto bona summa de danari: Perho l' andera parte per autorita de questo conseglio: la fabriga del Fontego suprascripto far se debi iuxta el modello composto per el prefato Hieronymo Thodescho," &c.

† "Ne se possi in esso Fontego far cosa alcuna de marmoro, ne etiam lavoriero alcuno intagliado de straforo over altro per alcun modo: ma dove l' acadera far se debi de piera viva batuda de grosso et da ben, sicome sera bisogno."

‡ Franc. Sansovino, Venezia, 1581, p. 135. Compare Th. Elze, *Der Fondaeo dei Tedeschi*, in the *Ausland*, of 1870, p. 625.

court, and, on the side towards the Grand Canal, an open hall of five arches, supported on roughly cut pillars and with ornamental borders. Only the first story on this principal frontage has side galleries and double arched windows; the other two have plain square windows likewise coupled. In the middle of the façade, towards the canal, there is an ornamented stone let in, with the inscription, GERMANICIS D(edicatum), and under it an architect's mark, like a pentacle; all the rest is plastered over. In the little passage which leads, on the right, to the church of San Bartolommeo, is a lovely little marble gateway with fluted columns and rich capitals surmounted by an attic. On the keystone of the arch, is a Cupid holding a horn of plenty, and the inscription, "*Principatus Leonardi Lauredani inclyti ducis anno sexto.*" To judge from the style of the building, "Hieronymo Tedescho" was an Augsburg architect; a view which is supported by the fact that the Augsburg and Nuremberg merchants presided at the two boards of the Fondaco, and were thus at the head of the German colony in Venice.* It is further proved too by the distribution of the sale-rooms in the new Fondaco; the two first shops being occupied by the Fuggers of Augsburg, and the two next by Anton Kolb and Leonhard Hirschvogel of Nuremberg; after which comes another Augsburger, Rehlinger, and so on. The architecture, however, of these sale-rooms and warehouses shows no trace of Nuremberg influence.

If the Germans cared so much about their Fondaco being built by a fellow-countryman, they were probably prompted by a like feeling when there was a question of having, at the same time, an altar-piece for the Church of San Bartol-

* For the history of the Fondaco, see *Capitulare dei Visdomini del Fontego dei Todeschi in Venezia*, ed. G. M. Thomas, Berlin, 1874; also the notice of this work by W. Heyd, *Das Haus der deutschen Kaufleute in Venedig*, in Sybel's *Historische Zeitschrift*, xvi. 194, &c.

ommeo which was attached to it; and it was natural that, in order to satisfy the jealousy existing between the two ruling parties, which sometimes broke out into open hostility, Nuremberg should receive the same consideration as Augsburg, and that the honourable commission to paint the altar-piece should have been given to Dürer, through the good offices of Pirkheimer's friend, the art-loving Anton Kolb. This was no doubt the avowed object of the journey to Venice which Dürer undertook in 1505. That he was in Venice before the end of that year is proved by his first letter to Pirkheimer, with good wishes for the New Year, and still more by his second, dated February 7, 1506, in which he thinks it necessary to excuse himself for his former long silence by pleading his laziness in writing, and then breaks out with these touching words: "So I must humbly ask you to forgive me, for I have no other friend on earth but you."

Another valuable proof that Dürer was already in Venice in 1505 is furnished by a drawing formerly belonging to Mr. Danby Seymour, in London. It is a black chalk study of a large female head, with a linen headdress, the eyes closed, and the mouth open, showing the teeth. On it is Dürer's monogram, and the inscription in his own hand, "*Una Wilana Windisch* 1505," which must mean not a peasant-woman of the name of Windisch, but of Windisch, that is, Slavonic, nationality. The Italian words, with the context, will hardly admit of any other inference than that Dürer did this study of a Windisch woman on his journey to Venice, in Friuli or some other province on the borders of Italy. He may perhaps have had the opportunity of sketching it in Venice itself, just as in all probability he did there the pen-drawing of a woman of Albania or some part of Turkey, in a long mantle bordered with fur, her head enveloped in a linen coif with a long falling hood. This

head is repeated on the same piece of paper in a high cylindrical cap without a frill. Above these drawings, which are in the Ambrosian Library at Milan, is the inscription, "*Ein Türgin*,"—"a Turkish woman."

Already in his first letter, dated January 6, Dürer says: "I have to do a picture for the Germans, for which they are to give me 110 Rhenish florins, and the expenses will not exceed five. I shall have finished preparing and scraping the panel in eight days,* when I shall at once begin, so that, God willing, it may be in its place above the altar a month after Easter. I hope, please God, to save the whole of the money." On February 7, however, he writes: "I have only to-day begun to sketch in my picture." Soon afterwards there are signs of his being dissatisfied with the commission, as if he had been hasty in accepting it, for on April 2 he says: "Know too that I could have made a great deal of money if I had not undertaken that picture for the Germans. There is a great deal of work in it, and I cannot finish it before Whitsuntide. Besides, they only give me 85 ducats for it, and you know what the expense of living is. I have bought several things, and sent some money home, so that not much is left. But you may be quite sure that I have no intention of leaving this place till God enables me to repay you with thanks, and have 100 gulden over.† I should easily earn this if I had not to do this German picture, for, with the exception of the painters, every one wishes me well." From this it appears that he had accepted the commission before he knew how well known and even

* Dürer writes, "verfertigen mit Weissen und Schaben."

† This agrees strikingly with the statement of his possessions in 1507–1508, which has already been often referred to, and according to which he paid his debt by the profits of his Venetian journey, and spent the remainder in buying, besides some good household furniture, "100 Rhenish florins worth of good colours," *Dürers Briefe*, p. 136 and note.

celebrated his name and his art already were in Venice; and at the same time it confirms the supposition that there had been some previous negotiation between Venice and Nuremberg which had been the chief cause of his undertaking the journey. Even so early as February 28 he writes: "Such crowds of Italians come to see me that I am forced to hide myself sometimes. All the nobles wish me well, but few of the painters."

On September 8, Dürer can tell his friend: "Know that my picture says it would give a ducat if you could see it; it is good, and beautiful in colour. I have gained much praise for it, but little profit. I could easily have earned 200 ducats in the time, and I have refused many commissions in order to return home as soon as possible. I have also silenced the painters, who said that I was a good engraver, but did not know how to manage colours. Now every one says they never saw more beautiful colouring." Dürer adds that the doge Leonardo Loredano and the patriarch Domenico Grimani had seen his picture before it was finished; no slight honour for the German master, for both the spiritual and the temporal ruler of the Venice of those days were at the same time its most eager and intelligent art patrons. At last, on September 23, the picture was ready. The altar on which it was put up is at the end of the choir in San Bartolommeo, the burial-place of the "Natio Alemanna," a small basilica with pillars, a barrel-vaulted roof in the nave and transept, and a little octagonal cupola over the intersection. Dürer was now genuinely pleased with his great success; for, speaking of the diplomatic triumph of which Pirkheimer had to tell him, he says: "And just as you are pleased with yourself, so I give you herewith to understand that there is not a better picture of the Virgin in the land; for all the artists praise it just as the great people praise

you. They say they never saw a more sublime or more lovely picture," &c.*

The subject of the picture was the Glorification of the Virgin at the Feast of the Rosary, whence it is usually called "The Feast of the Rosary" or "Rose Garlands." The Emperor Rudolph II. purchased it for a large sum,† and is said to have had it most carefully packed, and carried on the shoulders of four strong men from Venice to Prague, rather than run any risk of its being injured by the shaking of a carriage. It was to have been removed, with some other pictures, from the imperial collection in Prague to Vienna by order of Joseph II., but was lost in an unaccountable manner, and came later into the possession of the monks of the monastery of Strahow, near Prague. In the midst of a bright landscape, and immediately in front of a dark green curtain, bordered with purple, the Virgin, in blue drapery and with golden hair, sits enthroned with the Infant Jesus; around her throng numerous angels engaged, with St. Dominic, the founder of the Feast of the Rosary, in crowning with garlands of natural roses a multitude of persons kneeling before them.‡ In the middle are the pope and the emperor; the former is being crowned by the Infant Jesus, the latter by the Virgin; both wear wide

* Cf. the contemporary judgment of Christoph Scheurl (*De Laudibus Germaniae*): "Germani Venetiis commorantes totius civitates absolutissimum opus, ab hoc perfectum monstrant; ita Caesarem exprimens, ut ei praeter spiritum deesse videatur nihil." Also Franc. Sansovino, Venetia, 1581, p. 48: "una palla di nostra donna di mano d'Alberto Duro, di bellezza singolare per disegno, per diligenza et per colorito."

† It was replaced in San Bartolommeo by an Annunciation by Rottenhammer. In the catalogue of the Prague Gallery the picture is thus described: "A very lovely Virgin placing a crown of roses on the head of the Emperor Maximilian I., with St. Dominic and other persons, and many angels; a remarkable work by Albert Dürer." *Berichte des Alterthumsverein in Wien*, 1864, vii. 105.

‡ See on the worship of the rosary, A. Springer, *Raphaelstudien*, in the *Zeitschrift für bildende Kunst*, vii. 79.



THE FEAST OF THE ROSARY, OR ROSE GARLANDS.

(*From the Picture in the Monastery of Strahow, at Prague.*)

To face p. 344, Vol. I.

purple mantles, that of the pope being richly embroidered in gold and pearls, and having figures of St. Peter and of a pelican worked on the border. They are portraits of Maximilian I. and Julius II. That Dürer intended not only the emperor, but the pope too, to be a portrait, can easily be seen by comparing the head in the picture with the medal which the Pope had struck, in 1506, by Caradossa on the laying of the foundation-stone of St. Peter's. Dürer had nothing but coins to guide him, and the small scale of his model accounts for his having slightly softened the mighty bull's head of Della Rovere and given it somewhat of a German character.* Amongst the kneeling figures at the sides there are, no doubt, portraits of the leading German merchants and their relations. The thin man on the right with a square in his hand can be no other than Master Hieronymus, the builder of the new Fondaco; while the two figures behind him, standing near a tree, are intended for Wilibald Pirkheimer and Dürer himself. The latter holds in his hand a large scroll, on which is written, "*Exegit quinquemestri spatio Albertus Dürer Germanus MDVI*" and his monogram. If Dürer, from a feeling of just pride, thus recorded his nationality in a foreign land, he was equally mindful of his beloved native city, for his friend stands on one side of him, and, on the other, in the distance near his head, can be seen a group of buildings which, notwithstanding their fanciful surroundings and the high mountains towering over them, represent the imperial castle of Nuremberg.†

Strictly harmonious, while showing great freedom of design, full of solemn feeling and at the same time of life,

* Even our small wood engraving of the picture suffices, when compared with the contemporary coin which Dürer probably copied, to confirm this conclusion.

† See above, p. 279.

original and yet adapted in a measure to the Venetian taste of that day, the composition of the "Feast of the Rosary" is altogether most masterly. The simple pyramid-shaped group in the centre, formed by the pope and the emperor at the feet of the Virgin and Child, brings out clearly the fundamental idea of the old German conception of the universe. The figures in the crowded groups on either side seem almost to be mere spectators, and have about them somewhat of that look of calm repose which characterises a Venetian crowd in the paintings of Gentile Bellini or Carpaccio. The angel playing on the lute at the feet of the Virgin is like one of the melodious heavenly beings in a "*Santa Conversazione*" of Giovanni Bellini. The fine, open, northern-looking landscape, and the clear atmosphere, with the cherubs floating in it, give the whole picture a peculiarly bright and cheerful character. There is but little means of judging of its much praised execution, for the picture has suffered greatly. Scarcely one of the twenty-four heads below, or of the twelve cherub heads in the sky, remains untouched. Large pieces of the surface have fallen away, especially in the middle, and nearly the whole has been painted over.* It is only from little bits here and there, and by comparing it with other well-preserved pictures of Dürer's, that we can form some vague idea of its original brilliancy. The drawing for our wood engraving has been executed from the best attainable sources, and is chiefly founded upon a tracing made for the purpose by the painter Tkadlik in the year 1840, previous to the latest and most injurious restoration.†

* Cf. Waagen, in the *Deutsches Kunstblatt*, 1854, p. 200, &c. and 1856, p. 378; and in the *Zeitsch. für christl. Archäologie und Kunst*, Leipzig, 1857, p. 88. Also E. Förster, *Denkmale deutscher Kunst*, viii. 3, p. 19, with plates.

† This tracing is in the Albertina. The small steel engraving drawn by Friese and engraved by Battmann in

As Dürer puts the time occupied by him in painting the picture at five months, he cannot have begun it before April. The previous months were taken up in making sketches, studies, and designs. Fortunately, some of these remain, and they prove how earnestly he applied himself to all this preparatory work, and at the same time are of use in reconstructing the picture. They are easily recognised by the light blue, unprepared paper, with the anchor watermark, which Dürer used at Venice in preference to any other. Those in the Albertina are:—the two hands of the emperor, in the same position as in the picture, but a little more apart; the half figure of St. Dominic, in exactly the same position; the kneeling donor in the left foreground, immediately behind the Pope;* a youthful curly head of a singer looking up, which has been engraved by Egidius Sadeler, and was perhaps a study for the playing angel; and, lastly, a full-faced, proud-featured female head of the Venetian type, which, notwithstanding that it has smooth-braided hair and is looking to the left, may have been a study for the head of the Virgin, now entirely destroyed. There is, besides, a coloured sketch for the pope's mantle washed in in brown, yellow, and violet on white paper with the spurious date 1514. All the other studies are on the blue paper, and are sketched with the brush with great freedom and mastery in Indian ink, and slightly heightened with white. Nearly every one bears the genuine date 1506. The Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris also has some drawings of the same kind: viz., a study for the Child, seated on an

1835 was also done before the last restoration. The lithograph by A. Klar and C. Hennig is not so good.

* This figure has been cut out and pasted on another piece of paper, on the upper part of which, to the left, is the comparatively modern inscription: "Van Heygh van Albertus," which has given rise to mistakes. Does it not mean that a person named Van Heygh once received this drawing from Dürer as a present?

outspread cloth, the upper part of the body supported on a cushion, and holding the rosary in his uplifted hands, while he turns away and looks slightly to the right; and three little angels' heads with necks and shoulders rising from the clouds in various positions. Both drawings have the genuine signature. In the Kunsthalle at Bremen there is an almost life-size seraph, looking up to the right, which seems to be another of these studies, though a drawing in the same collection of the Infant Jesus, seated on a brocaded carpet, and holding a cross in his little hands, was always probably intended for some other picture. Both have the date 1506.

A picture so famous as the "Feast of the Rosary" was of course repeatedly copied both before and after it came into the imperial collection.* The most curious of these copies are the ones in which for the pope has been substituted St. Catherine, as she appears in the water-colour sketch in the Albertina already mentioned,† and in the last woodcut of the Life of the Virgin, from which, indeed, the motive of the figure seems to be directly copied. As to St. Dominic, he is left out altogether, a sign that the copyist did not understand the real meaning of the picture, any more than those who in the present day venture to defend the originality of a copy so altered. The alteration itself points to a period some time after the execution of the picture, and was probably made either by a Protestant painter or for a Protestant patron, who preferred having a saint in the picture rather than, on any account, the pope. A copy of this kind was removed from the Belvedere gallery at Vienna to the museum at Lyons; another is in the Ambras

* The copy on linen by "an Italian master," which Heller, p. 248, describes as being in the Grimani gallery in 1821, I could not find in the Palazzo Grimani-Spago; it had been sold long ago.

† P. 179.

collection at Vienna; and a third belongs to Dr. Johann Urban, of Prague.*

Dürer announces the completion of the "Feast of the Rosary" to Pirkheimer in these words: "Know also that my picture is ready, as well as another *quadro* different from anything I have ever done before." What there was peculiar in this other work, done at the same time, and so quickly finished, we are not told; nor, indeed, can we do more than conjecture even what it was. Perhaps the "Christ among the Doctors," now in the Barberini gallery in Rome, is meant: a picture with seven life-sized heads or half-figures, which Dürer boasted of having finished in five days, a truly marvellous feat, when compared with the five months occupied on the "Feast of the Rosary." It is like that picture in the technical method employed, and in the care with which the preliminary studies for it were made, but is very inferior in composition, in taste, and in execution. The three heads one above another by the side of the Saviour are too crowded, and their grouping is faulty. Dürer seems to have thought of nothing but the effect of contrast between the different physiognomies and the varied play of the hands, which are certainly full of expression, and seem almost to speak. But what splendid studies Dürer made for these hands! The wonderful sketch for the hands of Christ held in an attitude of demonstration, the forefinger of the right hand touching the thumb of the left, which, and not the head, form the central point in the picture, is in the Hausmann collection now belonging to Dr. Blasius at Brunswick, and has been engraved by Loedel. There is also in the same collection a sketch of the hands of the two chief doctors, each holding a large book. In the picture a slip of paper

* H. Grimm is of a different opinion. See his *A. Dürer in Venedig, Ueber Künstler und Kuntswerke*, i. 148, &c.

hangs out of the book on the left, with the date 1506, the monogram, and the inscription, "*Opus quinque dierum.*" The study for the head of the Holy Child in this picture is perhaps the most Italian of Dürer's drawings; and though this effect may be due chiefly to his having had a Venetian model, with large eyes, prominent chin, and arched eyebrows, still the soft outline of the head, a little bent, the slightly parted lips, and the broad execution, show us Dürer from a new side. The drawing has been engraved by Egidius Sadeler, and is in the Albertina, where is also to be found a sketch for the hand of the doctor, near the top of the picture on the left, holding between his fingers a half open book. The special merits of these drawings, which are done on the same blue anchor paper as those for the "Feast of the Rosary," are not preserved in the picture, which has now a dark, unpleasant appearance, and has been much rubbed out and smeared over with oil and varnish. The figures were, it is clear, originally drawn in lines and hatchings with the brush in Dürer's earlier manner, then grounded in tempera, and only thinly and lightly glazed with oil. There is an old copy of the picture in the Brunswick gallery.

Melancholy as the sight of the original in the Barberini palace now is, it has a special interest on account of the singularity of the composition, and the strongly marked look of the heads and hands. In representing this dumb dispute, Dürer had set himself a problem in physiognomy, under, no doubt, the incentive of some example of Leonardo da Vinci's great achievements of that kind, or a description of them. Hence the powerful energy of the old men's heads, and their lifelike gestures, which are so strikingly contrasted in the case of Christ and the old man next to him on the right as to amount to a caricature. Also, the aggressive action of the old man's hands towards those

of the Child recall a similar well-balanced relation between the hands of Judas and of the Saviour in Leonardo's "Last Supper." A "Christ amongst the Doctors," also in half-length, attributed to Leonardo, is now only known to us from school pictures, but these may have been done after an original by him, or, at any rate, a drawing. We are thus furnished with the first clue towards the discovery of that hitherto obscure connection which existed between Leonardo and Dürer, and which we shall have to examine the traces of farther on. An age which delighted in partly speculative problems of this kind must have followed with particular attention any efforts to solve them. It is evident, besides, that the last touches Dürer gave this picture, in spite of the rapidity with which it was painted, must have been of exceptional delicacy. Take, for example, the head of the foremost Pharisee, in the left foreground, which is full of character and powerful energy, intensified in expression by the fierce-looking mustachios. Lorenzo Lotto borrowed this head for his St. Onuphrius, in his picture of the Virgin, dated 1508, in the Borghese gallery in Rome, and copied it exactly, imitating the delicate, careful treatment of the hair, in which Dürer often took delight, and which therefore we may confidently suppose was not wanting in Lotto's now damaged model.

In his painting of hair, Dürer, as his sketches with the brush show, was very rapid; and the fact that young Lotto took so much pains to imitate him in this serves to corroborate a pretty anecdote introduced by Camerarius into the preface to his Latin translation of the 'Treatise on Proportion' of 1532. It probably came from Dürer himself, and deserves more attention than most plausible stories of the kind. Dürer's friendship with the aged Bellini is indeed one of the most pleasing incidents in the course of his artistic career. The story runs that Bellini, while

paying a visit to Dürer, asked, as a special mark of affection, for one of the brushes used by the latter in painting hair. Dürer held out to him a number of ordinary brushes, and told him to choose one, or take them all if he liked. Bellini, thinking Dürer had not understood him, again asked for one of the particular brushes with which, as he thought, Dürer was accustomed to do his fine hair painting. On this Dürer assured him that he used nothing but the ordinary brushes, and, to prove it, painted on the spot a long lock of woman's hair in his peculiar manner. Bellini is said to have acknowledged to several people afterwards that he would never have believed it if he had not seen it with his own eyes. This story is very characteristic of Dürer, and he was just the man to take pleasure in repeating it. He had already told Pirkheimer, in his second letter, dated February 7, 1506, that Giovanni had made friends with him and paid him a visit, a circumstance easily explained by the close connection existing between the two Bellini brothers and the Fondaco dei Tedeschi, where both successively discharged the functions of broker; the younger Giovanni having obtained the reversion of the post, with a salary, as far back as 1479, and having probably already at the time of Dürer's visit succeeded his brother Gentile, who died in the following year. Such a "*Senseria*" in the German guild was very profitable, and brought in about 300 scudi a year. It was generally given by the Signoria to the chief painter in the town, who in return was bound to paint the portrait of the newly elected doge for the palace of St. Mark, for the modest sum of 8 scudi. The office was held at one time by Titian, who applied for it in 1513, and was appointed on December 6, 1516, after the death of Giovanni Bellini.* Dürer must therefore have made

* Vasari, ed. Le Monnier, xiii. 22, 23.

the acquaintance of Giovanni directly after his arrival in Venice, for in that same letter of February 7, after speaking of those painters who found fault with him, and yet diligently borrowed from him, he says: "But Gian Bellini has praised me highly before several of the nobles, and is very anxious to have something of mine. He even came himself to me, and begged me to paint him something, promising to pay well for it. And people all tell me that he is a very upright man, so that I feel most favourably disposed towards him. Though very old, he is still the best painter here." After all, might not that picture of "Christ amongst the Doctors" have been painted as a memento for Bellini, and young Lorenzo Lotto, then working in Bellini's studio, have thus found the opportunity of borrowing from it?

Vasari undoubtedly goes too far when he asserts that Bellini himself imitated Dürer in one of his last pictures, the "Bacchanal," painted in 1514 for Alfonso of Ferrara, and finished by Titian.* There may perhaps be something in the broken folds of the draperies suggestive of Dürer's manner, or rather the manner of the German masters in general; but it can hardly be supposed that the aged master was influenced in any special way by Dürer and his "Feast of the Rosary." Unfortunately we are not told whether Dürer came into close contact with Bellini's scholars; but the appearance of the celebrated German might, and indeed must, have made a deep impression upon those younger

* This picture is now in the possession of the Duke of Northumberland at Alnwick Castle. Vasari, xiii. 23:—"La quale opera in vero fu con molta diligenza lavorata e colorita, intanto che e delle piu belle opere che mai facesse Gian Bellino, sebbene nella maniera de' panni è un certo che di tagliente, secondo la maniera tedesca; ma non è gran fatto, perchè imitò una tavola d' Alberto Duro fiammingo, che di que' giorni era stata condotta a Venezia e posta nella chiesa di San Bartolommeo, che è cosa rara e piena di molte belle figure fatte a olio." Vasari does not know that Dürer painted the "Feast of the Rosary" in Venice. Cf. Crowe and Cavalcaselle, *Hist. of Painting in North Italy*, i. 175, 191.

men; and though written records are silent, the works of art themselves are luckily able to tell us something. We turn first, as a matter of course, to Titian, then scarcely twenty years old, and what we find in his ease may perhaps throw some light on the subject of Giovanni Bellini's "Bacchanal," for Titian, we know, completed the unfinished work of his master, even if he did not paint it entirely in Bellini's studio. The picture, it is true, is signed by Bellini,* to whom Alfonso of Ferrara had given the commission; but it is more likely that the aged master should have entrusted his brilliant pupil with the task of painting it than that he should have delivered a picture, signed and dated, in a quite unfinished condition, to his employer, and that the latter should afterwards have engaged Titian to finish it. Such an idea would also explain the opposition between the "careful miniature-like painting" of the picture and the "broad, flowing style" which Bellini had long before adopted. But however this may be, the picture bears Titian's mark as distinctly as though his signature were on it. The castle towers on the rocky hill in the background, are in fact an exact representation of Cadore, his home and birthplace, and consequently the whole of the enchanting landscape is no doubt by him; it certainly displays all his characteristics. And even if any trace of Dürer can be found in the broken draperies of the groups in the foreground, this also may be put down to the credit of the youthful Titian.

Titian is the greatest of the Venetian and indeed of all Italian landscape painters, and that he formed himself in this branch of his art upon German models cannot be doubted, even though we may not believe Vasari's statement that he kept some celebrated German landscape painters in his house for this purpose.† Whence indeed could he have

* IOANNES BELLINVS VENETVS PINXIT MDXIIII.

† Vasari, ed. Le Monnier, xiii. 20, mentions, immediately after speaking

got them? At any rate, there was no one at that time superior to Dürer in landscape painting, and Titian must have been powerfully influenced by his example, if not by personal intercourse with him. It was to the same source, too, that Titian probably owed his love of wood-engraving, by means of which he published, as early as 1508, his great work, 'The Triumph of Faith.' No doubt Titian saw a great deal more of Dürer's paintings than we have any idea of now. The very fact of looking at his fellow-student Lorenzo Lotto copying a head from Dürer's picture would be enough to stimulate him to a like task; and Lanzi was certainly quite right when he maintained that Titian, in his celebrated early work, "Christ and the Tribute Money," had vied with Dürer in delicacy of execution. But it is not only by its minute external finish that this picture reminds us of Dürer. Its deep inward sentiment is also borrowed from him. The noble, finely chiselled head of Christ, gazing with its blue eyes so gently and yet so piercingly into those of the treacherous questioner, is of German origin. Something of Dürer's power is there, softened by a touch of Jacopo dei Barbari's feeling. And this mingled expression in the countenance is all in favour of our theory; for if, as may be supposed, there was amongst the pictures which Dürer brought with him a head of Christ, it must have been like this. Indeed, the figure of the youthful Saviour in the picture of "Christ amongst the Doctors" shows a similar mixture, both in form and sentiment. And there is besides the same physiognomical contrast in "The Tribute Money" as in that picture, not only between the heads, but between the hands, of the two men—

of Titian's share in the painting of the Fondaco dei Tedeschi, a "Flight into Egypt," "in mezzo a una gran boscaglia e certi paesi molto ben fatti, per avere dato Tiziano molti mesi opera a fare simili cose, e tenuto per ciò in casa alcuni Tedeschi, eccellenti pittori di paesi e verzure."

the vulgar, strongly marked, questioning hand of the Pharisee and the delicate, answering one of the Redeemer. This work, which was also painted for Alfonso of Ferrara, is now an ornament of the Dresden gallery; and it should never be forgotten that, superior though it may be to Dürer's paintings in taste and grandeur, it was to the German master the Venetian owed the inspiration that produced this picture so full of feeling, which we at the present day admire in the chief gallery in Germany.

Crowe and Cavalcaselle ascribe the same kind of influence to a small picture of Dürer's in the Dresden gallery, of "Christ on the Cross."* The moment represented is shown by the inscription below, "PATER IN MANVS TVAS COMMENDO SPIRITVM MEVM"; above, on the stem of the cross, which is made of the rough trunk of a tree, is the date 1506, and the monogram. Notwithstanding the small scale for a work in oils, the face, shaded with the crown of thorns, is most strikingly expressive. The mouth, opened wide in the appeal to heaven, shows the upper teeth and the tongue, an attempt as bold as it is successful. The body is very well drawn, and powerfully and firmly painted in a warm brownish tint. The flowing ends of the cloth round the loins are cleverly used to fill up the space between the arms and the stem of the cross, which stands out against the blackness of

* Bought from the Böhm collection in Vienna, 1865; it is on wood, 7½ inches high by 6 inches broad, and was engraved in 1868 by Langer. "For proportion, power, life, and noble character this exquisite piece rivals the creations of Leonardo da Vinci. The flesh is treated with a soft blending, and with a firmness of touch and richness of enamel almost unrivalled; and such is the minuteness of the detail that we can see the hairs on the frame and the reflections in the eyes. A gem of this kind would naturally attract the attention of the great Venetians, and lead them to analyse nature with more care than was their wont; and it can hardly be doubted that studies of this sort were the moving cause of Titian's undertaking that marvel of his youth, the "Christ with the Tribute Money." —Crowe and Cavalcaselle, *Hist. of Painting in North Italy*, i. 177. See also the same authors' *Life of Titian*, i. 117 et seq.

the sky. The only light is in the low horizon, where gradually fading tones of green, yellow, and red, illuminate with a magic gleam the deep blue shore and the waters of the far distance—a true Venetian night effect. The airy tops of some delicately painted birch trees which stand out on the right foreground are all in harmony with the world-forsaken solitude of the crucified Lord. It is rare to find a picture on so small a scale possess such grandeur. But Dürer could scarcely have brought with him to Venice so much boldness and cleverness in the use of colour. The presence of these seems to me to point undoubtedly to the influence of Giorgione, who painted at the Fondaco dei Tedeschi in 1506–1508, and whom Dürer must have known, though, curiously enough, he does not say a word in his letters about the great colourist, nor about Marco Marziale, whose coarse and even ugly figures might naturally have reminded him of his native country.

There is a coloured pen sketch in the Albertina of Christ on the Cross, dated 1505, which has many points of analogy with this picture, though it can only be looked upon as a very indirect preliminary study; and there are two other drawings of the good and the bad thief, which are similarly done, and evidently formed part of the whole design. Perhaps the small Dresden picture was intended in the same way for the centre-piece of an altar in a private house, or for use on a journey. These drawings in the Albertina appear to have also served for the Calvary in the woodcut of the Crucifixion;* and the figures were so

* Bartsch, 59. A small contemporary painting, copied from this woodcut by, as seems likely, a young but clever pupil of Dürer's, passed from the Kränner collection in Ratisbon into the Rauter collection in Munich, and thence into the grand-ducal gallery at Darmstadt. It was in the Exhibition of Pictures by Old Masters at Munich, in 1869, No. 15 in the catalogue, and was erroneously attributed to a painter called Melchior Feselen.

arranged that, with only a little alteration, the thin good thief became the bad one, and the fat bad thief the good one, so that there was no need to reverse the drawing for the woodcut.

In his letter of February 28, 1506, Dürer says that he had "sold all his pictures but one"; and from the following letter he would appear to have asked 12 ducats for each of the four he had disposed of. They must therefore have been small pictures, some, no doubt, done at Nuremberg and others at Venice. The "Christ on the Cross" certainly belongs to the latter category, for it bears, in my opinion, indisputable signs of the influence of Venetian models, or, at any rate, of Italian skies. Dürer did not want for orders in Venice, and he was only sorry not to be able to execute them all; but he exaggerates very much when he writes, on September 23, that he had "declined work to the amount of more than 2000 ducats"; a cipher too much must have dropped from his pen. A picture dated 1506, of an almost life-size Virgin, seated, and crowned by two flying angels, is in the possession of the Marquis of Lothian, in Scotland, and was exhibited in London at the Royal Academy Old Masters Exhibition of 1871. Though much rubbed out and painted over, it still retains traces of authenticity.*

As far as we know, Dürer only accomplished one of the expeditions he had proposed making from Venice into other parts of Italy. He writes, it is true, on August 28: "When

* The following pictures in Italy attributed to Dürer may be dismissed as spurious:—An Ecce Homo, with a number of Jews, three quarter length figures, in the doge's palace at Venice, is a Dutch picture, of which there is a large engraving;—A girl with a cat at a window, with the date 1508, and the inscription, "*Ich pint mit vergis mein nit*,"—"I make a wreath of forget-me-nots," belonging to the Prince of Santangelo at Naples, has nothing in common with Dürer;—A small Ecce Homo in the Casa Trivulzi at Milan, is a Nuremberg forgery;—And a head of St. John dated 1521, in the Manfredini gallery at Venice, is the same.

the king comes to Wälschland (Italy), I have a mind to go to Rome with him." But Maximilian's Roman journey never took place. Dürer's wish, too, to visit the aged Mantegna at Mantua was hindered by that master's sudden death, on September 13, 1506. Bologna was the only place he actually went to. In the last of his letters from Venice that we possess, dated "about the 13th October 1506," he writes: "I shall have finished here in ten days; then I mean to go on horseback to Bologna, to learn the secrets of perspective, which some one there is willing to teach me, and after staying eight or ten days there I shall return to Venice." That he actually carried out this intention, we know from Christoph Scheurl, who had been studying in Bologna since 1497, and was syndic of the German nation at the university there from 1504 to 1506, on December 23 in which latter year he was made doctor of both civil and canon law. Scheurl was born in a house opposite Dürer's paternal home in the Unter der Vesten, and, though some ten years younger than Dürer, was always his great friend and enthusiastic admirer. He tells us that Dürer came through Ferrara, and received there poetic honours at the hands of the humanist Riccardo Sbroglio of Udine, the same who, probably through Scheurl's influence, was afterwards summoned by the elector Frederic the Wise to the university of Leipzig.* Scheurl witnessed the reception which the painters of Bologna prepared for Dürer, and heard them publicly proclaim him as the first amongst all the painters of the world, and declare that they were more ready to die

* *Libellus de laud. Germ.*: "Tantam pingendi artem, multis seculis intermissam, per Norimbergenses revocatam, quum hoc anno Ferrarie admirata esset Sbrullia musa, in tale tetrasticon erupit extemporaliter," &c. Then follows a second eulogy: "Eiusdem distichon Alberto Durero ex tempore dictum"; and again a third by the same Ricardus Sbrullius, whom Scheurl at other times calls "Neotherieus Naso."

now that they had seen the long-desired Albert.* Highly coloured statements these, which must not however be looked upon as the outcome of an exaggerated feeling for friend and fatherland, but should rather be put down to the humanist spirit of the age, which delighted to express itself in the strongest terms alike of courtesy and abuse.

There would be no use in attempting to conjecture who were the painters that welcomed Dürer to Bologna with such honour. It is enough to remember that the benevolent and gentle Francesco Raibolini, called Il Francia, stood like a father at their head. He was at once painter and goldsmith, and his school had produced Dürer's most zealous imitator Marc Antonio Raimondi, hence surnamed "de' Franci." Francia was also an intimate friend of Raphael's; but Passavant's statement, that the latter was at Bologna in 1506, does not rest on sufficient authority. Had he been there, he would certainly have joined in the homage paid to Dürer. Michel Angelo, on the other hand, did not come to Bologna, to make his peace with the new lord of the town, Pope Julius II., whom he had rashly quitted, till November, when Dürer was no longer there; and even had he been, he would doubtless have found the proud Florentine unapproachable. Dürer went to Bologna to learn some secrets in perspective. These secrets were evidently certain practical methods of simplifying the laborious process of construction which were not at that time common property, but were made a mystery of by those

* Chr. Scheurl, *Commentarius de Vita et Obitu Dom. Antonii Kress*, ed Norimbergae, 1515: "Et in magno pretio habuit Albertum Durer Norembergensem, quem ego Germanum Apellem per excellentiam appellare soleo. Testes mihi sunt, ut reliquos taceam, Bononienses pictores, qui illi in faciem me audiente publice principatum picturae in universo orbe detulerunt affirmantes, jucundius se morituros, viso tam diu desiderato Alberto."

who knew them, and only communicated by word of mouth. Whoever the master at Bologna was whom Dürer credited with the ability and the will to initiate him in these matters, it is probable that he had already entered into relations with him at Venice through Scheurl.

Harzen suggests that it can have been no other than the aged Piero della Francesca dal Borgo San Sepolcro, famous for his knowledge of perspective, which he taught to Luca Signorelli, and the author of a work *De Perspectiva pingendi*, and also quoted by Vasari as more learned in Euclid than anyone else.* His favourite pupil, Luca Pacioli, the learned mathematician, does, in fact, mention Bologna as one of the places where Piero dal Borgo worked with distinction, without, however, giving any clue to the date of his stay there. Now that Harzen has discovered Piero's work, which was supposed to be lost, a closer study of it, as well as of Dürer's writings, will doubtless throw light upon the subject. As yet we only know that Dürer in his *Unterweisung der Messung* ('Instructions on Measurement') follows often very closely Pacioli's work, *De Divina Proportione*, which appeared at Venice in 1509. This work was, however, written ten years previously. Pacioli was until 1499 with Leonardo da Vinci at Milan, at the court of Lodovico il Moro. He was a member of the academy which Leonardo founded there, and directed himself, and the two were on such friendly terms that Leonardo adorned the MS. of Pacioli's work, which was intended for the duke, with drawings by his own hand. Pacioli relates this himself in his subsequent dedication to the Gonfaloniere of Florence, Pietro Soderini. After the sudden fall of Lodovico, Pacioli

* E. Harzen, *Ueber den Maler Piero degli Franceschi*, in the *Archiv für zeichn. Künste*, ii. 231–244. Vasari, ed. Le Monnier, iv. 22. Crowe and Cavalcaselle, *Hist. of Painting in Italy*, ii. 528, 548.

led a wandering life as a mathematical teacher, and is very likely to have stopped by chance at Bologna. Dürer must have met him there or in Venice, or he could not have borrowed so freely from Luca's printed work, at least not without acknowledging the source.

It is of importance to us to assume that a meeting took place between Dürer and Pacioli, because it gives us the only clue not only to the general bearing but to certain particulars of Dürer's relations with Leonardo. Any attempt to show how these two remarkable men resembled one another in the brilliancy of their talents and gifts, in their characters and in their spirit of inquiry, would lead us too far. There are, however, amongst others, six woodcuts of Dürers', black discs, upon which a symmetrical and concentrically arranged arabesque scrollwork of ribbons or festoons stands out in relief. These wonderful ornamentations are commonly called Dürer's "Patterns for Embroidery"; he himself calls them in his Netherlands diary "the Six Knots."* By adding four corner ornaments to the discs, Dürer gave these woodcuts an oblong shape. His monogram was not placed on them, in the centre, till the second impression. The very same patterns are to be found in some old Italian copper engravings, but on a white ground, and bearing in the centre the curious inscription, "ACADEMIA LEONARDI VINCI." Vasari† knew of these strange pieces, which are the only existing memorials of that mysterious learned society. That they must have been designed by one of the artists immediately about Leonardo at Milan is shown by their resemblance to the decorations of the vaulted ceiling of the sacristy of Santa

* *Dürers Briefe*, p. 109; Bartsch, Nos. 140–145.

† Ed. Le Monnier, vii. 14. Cf. Max Jordan, *Das Malerbuch des Leonardi da Vinci*, Leipzig, 1873, p. 14, and *Jahrb. für Kunstw.* v. 295.

Maria delle Grazie. Along the edges of the flat surface in the centre of each vaulting, there runs, on a blue ground, heightened with gold and silver, a varied ornamentation of twisted cords of different thicknesses, which in the corners resembles the meshes of a net.* This decoration was being executed at the time that Leonardo was at work upon his "Last Supper" in the refectory close by. Dürer may have become acquainted with the mysterious embroidery patterns, which it would appear were always very scarce, through Luca Pacioli. But he would scarcely have copied them without some special inducement. Wenzel Hollar has preserved a simpler example of the same sort of decoration in the ornaments published by him after Dürer's drawings probably from the Arundel collection. It consists of two small wreaths of narrow leaves, filled in with scrollwork of similar design in the centre, but not concentrically arranged.† These may also have been done after Leonardo's designs.

There is still another proof of the existence of relations between the two masters. We have seen how diligently Dürer, just before his journey to Venice, occupied himself in studying the horse, and the great progress that he displayed, under, probably, the incentive of Barbari's example, in the two engravings of 1505, though still without attaining to a perfect grasp of his subject. Horses, it is well known, were one of Leonardo's strong points; and his master, Verrocchio, was also very learned on the subject. Vasari possessed two drawings of horses by the latter, with each part measured, so that the size might be increased or diminished without any sacrifice of proportion or accu-

* Cf. G. Mongeri, *L' Arte in Milano*, 1872, p. 212, with an engraving of one of the pendentives.

† Parthey, *Wenzel Hollar*, No. 2565.

racy.* A remarkable monument of Verrocchio's knowledge and taste is the equestrian portrait of Balthasar Colleoni in front of SS. Giovanni e Paolo in Venice. Hermann Grimm† justly recognised the resemblance between this bronze and the horse in Dürer's "The Knight, Death, and the Devil," and Dürer may very possibly have studied the monument in 1506. But this was not enough to satisfy him. Studies for his engraving are preserved in Italian collections, in which only the knight and dog appear. They are done with the pen, and then traced on the reverse side of the paper, which has been previously tinted black, against a window pane, just as he used to do with his countless studies of the proportions of the human figure. One of them is in the Uffizii at Florence, the other in the Ambrosian Library at Milan. In both the body of the horse is marked out in squares, showing the proportions according to which the animal was doubtless constructed. And Dürer was evidently not working alone, for the brief directions with regard to the measurements on the Florentine drawing are not in his, but in a strange, handwriting, and in Latin. Some one, I have no doubt, is here giving him instructions in the proportions of the horse and an explanation, at the same time, of Verrocchio's theories. From a speculative brain like Luca Pacioli's he could certainly learn a good deal, Luca having taken care not to neglect the opportunity of getting some information out of Leonardo when the latter was at work on the colossal statue of Francesco Sforza in Milan. That the designs for his engraving of 1513 should have been made so long before as 1506 was quite in accordance with Dürer's custom, and it is probable that these sketches never left Italy. Enough, however, of suppositions; let us return to Venice with Dürer.

* Vasari, ed. Le Monnier, v. 44. † *Ueber Künstler und Kunstw.* ii. 230.

While there he painted portraits as well as other pictures. On the 23rd September 1506, he writes that he would have finished in four weeks at the latest, but that there were several portraits which he had promised to do. Of these portraits, only one, so far as I know, remains in Italy, in the Brignole Sale palace at Genoa. It is a half-length of a young man, a German to judge from his features, in a black cap, brown doublet, and black jacket, seen nearly full face. Unfortunately, the picture is much injured, and has been entirely repainted, with the exception of a small portion of the doublet with its black lacing, ending in two small clasps, and a part of the hair, which is very carefully and sharply rendered; but the excellence of the drawing is as striking as ever. It is painted on wood, with the inscription, in gold letters, "*Albertus Dürer germanus faciebat post virginis partum* 1506," and the monogram.

Dürer's return from Venice did not, as we now know, take place at the time repeatedly named in his letters, but was postponed until the year 1507. For in the library at Wolfenbüttel there is a copy of the Latin edition of Euclid published in Venice in 1505, in which Dürer has written his monogram, and the words: "*Dz puch hab ich Venedich vm ein Dugatn kawft im* 1507 *jor*"—"I bought this book in Venice for a ducat in 1507." * Another, therefore, of Dürer's portraits dated 1507 may, I think, be ascribed to the period of his stay in Venice. It is in the Imperial Gallery at Vienna, and represents a young German, with fair wavy hair and a small moustache and beard. He is slightly turned to the left, and wears a round cap and a

* Hausmann, *Archiv für zeichnende Kunst*, ii. 91. In the catalogue of the Imhoff collection for 1625 there appears as No. 5: "A small picture in oils of a woman half-length, painted by Albert Dürer's own hand in Venice in 1507, very lovely; valued at 300 florins." Eye, *Dürer*, Synoptical Table.

brown fur-trimmed coat, with the shirt showing in front. This little picture is so much rubbed that the glazes have quite disappeared, and only the pink flesh tones underneath remain; but traces of the original delicate and careful execution may still be perceived. There is, however, on the back of this panel something of more interest to us. It owes its existence, probably, to a rough joke of the artist's, who, to revenge himself on the original of the portrait—evidently one of the German merchants of the Fondaco—for paying him a price which seemed to him inadequate, or perhaps for not paying him at all, painted on the reverse side a hideous representation of Avarice. It is a half-length figure of a wrinkled, blear-eyed old woman with a long nose, laughing scornfully, and showing the only two teeth in her mouth; in her hand she holds an open sack full of glittering gold pieces; her fair hair is long and straight, her neck shrivelled, and the left shoulder covered with bright crimson drapery: a perfect type, in fact, of fantastic ugliness, all the more hideous that the outlines of the long face are regular and noble. But the most remarkable thing about the picture is its state of preservation, and the effect of relief produced by the employment of a thick pastose oil medium, as well as the glowing colouring, which in the absence of light becomes yet more deep and warm. There is, besides, no mistaking an affinity to the palette of a Vittore Carpaccio, a Giorgione, or a Titian. The crimson cloth by itself would proclaim the painting to be Venetian; did not the connection between the right and wrong side of the picture and the treatment of the hair point positively to Albert Dürer as the author. In method of painting then, as well as in subject, this picture of Avarice forms a rude parody of the portrait on the other side, which is evidently painted in tempera and finished with thin very liquid glazes.

We have here an expressive testimony to the exuberant

spirits which his lengthened stay in Venice gradually produced in Dürer, and of which he gives us most admirable proofs in his later letters to Pirkheimer. These letters from Dürer to Pirkheimer, so often quoted, are our main source of information for this important period of his life, and indeed for his history altogether. Eight of them were discovered, together with some books and other papers, in a room of the house belonging to the Imhoffs, which had been for a long time bricked-up, when that house in the middle of the last century passed by inheritance into the hands of Christoph Joachim von Haller. Since then they have been published several times, by Murr, Campe, and Eye, and their number has been increased to nine by the discovery of a letter longer than the others in the library of the British Museum.* They distinctly divide themselves into two groups, of which the first embraces the five letters from the 6th January to the 2nd April 1506. These betray the anxieties which had oppressed the master at home, and which pursued him abroad, as well as the bewilderment and anxiety produced in him by his strange surroundings. He repeatedly expresses his deep gratitude and devotion to the friend who seems to have lent him the means for making this journey. Thus he writes on the 7th of February:—"I cannot believe you are angry with me, for I look upon you as nothing less than a father.†

* The originals of the letters discovered in Nuremberg are preserved there in the town library, with the exception of the second, which passed into the private collection of M. H. Lempertz in Cologne, where we are assured it will be preserved for the benefit of his country and of science. There is a facsimile of it in M. Lempertz's *Bilderhefte zur Geschichte des Bücherhandels* 1853-1865, Plate 27. For information as to the other papers, see my edition of Dürer's Letters (*Dürers Briefe* etc., Vienna, 1872, Introduction, x.).

† Christ. Scheurl, in his contemporary work, *Libellus de laudibus Germaniæ*, writes in these flattering terms on the subject of the singular and brotherly relations existing between the two friends:—"Quemadmodum autem illis priscis pictoribus quædam comitas (sicut omnibus, vere literatis) inerat: ita hic Albertus facilis est,

I wish you were here in Venice. There are so many good fellows amongst the Italians (*Wälschen*), with whom I am becoming more and more friendly, that it does one's heart good; intelligent scholars, good players on the lute and the flute, amateurs of painting, and men who are thoroughly noble-minded and honest, and who show me much consideration and friendship. On the other hand, there are a set of the most thieving, lying scamps, such as I had no idea existed on earth; and anyone who was not up to their ways would believe them to be the best people in the world. For my part, I never can help laughing at them when they speak to me. They are quite aware that one knows all about their knavery, but they don't care. I have several good friends amongst the Italians, who warn me on no account to eat and drink with their painters, many of whom are hostile to me," &c.

Pirkheimer, on his part, plagues him with innumerable little commissions, not only for Greek books and papers and Persian carpets, but for glassware, and crane's feathers for his hat—"fool's feathers" as Dürer calls them—and more especially for precious stones and ornaments of all kinds. The accounts of how he has fulfilled these commissions occupy, indeed, the chief part of Dürer's letters. I am fortunate enough to be able to add to this first group of letters one which, if it contains nothing new, may be interesting as a specimen of Dürer's style. It would appear from it that he is afraid that his fourth letter of the 8th of March, in which he announced the despatch of a sapphire ring, may have been lost, and so he repeats some

humanus, officiosus et totus probus; quare etiam a summis viris magnopere diligitur, et imprimis a Vilibaldo Pirehamero perinde ac frater unice amatur: viro græce et latine vehementer erudito, optimo oratore, optimo senatore, optimo imperatore."

of the news he had already given. This recently found letter comes after the fifth of those already known.

DÜRER TO WILIBALD PIRKHEIMER.

"Venice, April 25, 1506.

"My willing service to you, dear Sir. I wonder that you do not write and tell me how you liked the sapphire ring that Hans Imhoff sent you by the messenger Schon of Augsburg. I do not know whether it reached you or not. I have been to Hans Imhoff* to enquire, and he says he thinks it must have reached you. There is a letter with it, which I wrote to you, and the stone is in a sealed parcel, and is of the size here drawn [*here follows a drawing of a ring*], and I have had great trouble to get it, for it is fine and rare, and my friends say it is very good for the money I gave for it. It weighs about 5 fl. Rhenish, and I gave 18 ducats and 4 *marzelli* † for it, and if it were lost, I should be half frantic. It is worth nearly double what I gave for it. They offered me more for it as soon as I had bought it. So pray, dear Herr Pirkheimer, tell Hans Imhoff ‡ to enquire from the messenger what he has done with the letter and parcel. He was sent by young Hans Imhoff on the 11th March. May God bless you. I commend my mother to you. Tell her to send my brother to Wolgemut, so that he may work and not get into idle habits.§ Ever your servant. Heed only the meaning of my words; I have seven more letters to write; a part already written. I am grieved about Herr Lorentz; remember me to him and to Stefan Paumgärtner.‖ Given at Venice in the year 1506, on St. Mark's Day.

ALBERT DÜRER.

Write to me soon, for I cannot rest till I hear. Andres Kunhofer ¶ is mortally ill, a messenger has just brought me the news." **

However singular Dürer's style may appear to us now, we see by comparing it with other letters of the period

* The younger of that name (born 1488, died 1526) became Pirkheimer's stepson in 1515. He was evidently in Venice at this time.

† Little Venetian coins, stamped with an effigy of St. Mark.

‡ The elder of the name, father of the one first mentioned; he was then at the head of the Nuremberg house.

§ This is his youngest brother Hans. See above, pp. 50–52. Also *Dürers Briefe*, p. 11, l. 32, and p. 189.

‖ One of the noble family of that name, an intimate friend of Dürer's, and donor of the Paumgärtner altar. See above p. 178. Herr Lorentz is probably Dr. L. Behaim, some time master of the household to Cardinal Borgia, afterwards Pope Alexander VI. (*Dürers Briefe*, 192).

¶ A young Nuremberger, probably an artisan, to whom Dürer often alludes; a good proof that this is the Andreas spoken of in a later letter, and not his own brother, as has been assumed.

** I am indebted for the copy of this hitherto unknown letter to my esteemed friend, Mr. William Mitchell, of London, who discovered the original in the library of the Royal Society. It is written on white anchor-marked paper, and has the usual address at the back:—"To the

that he was highly skilled in the use of his still somewhat clumsy mother tongue.* He writes with a freedom and correctness that few even of his learned contemporaries attained to.

There is unfortunately a gap in the letters from this time to the 28th August 1506. Meanwhile Dürer has become quite cheerful under the Italian sky. He seems to have felt particularly well in Venice, and therefore continued to postpone his departure. He had also learnt some Italian, or at least some Venetian dialect, which he mixes up in a wonderful way with little bits of Latin in his letters, using it to quiz his friend, who was rather proud of his success as a statesman:—

"*Al grandissimo primo uomo del mondo! Il vostro servitore, lo schiavo Alberto Dürer dice salute al suo magnifico Messer Wilibaldo Pirkheimer. Mia fede! io udii volontieri con grande piacere la vostra sanità e grande onore. Io mi meraviglio come è possibile stare un uomo come Voi contra tanti sapientissimi tiranni, buli, milites—non altro modo nisi per una grazia di Dio! Quando io lessi la vostra lettera di queste*

honourable and wise Her Wilbolt Pyrkeymer, at Nuremberg, my gracious master." Farther on is the following dedication: — "To my honoured, most trusted, and dear friend Heinrich Milich! At his repeated request I give him this letter of Dürer to my ancestor Wilibalt Pirkamer. He ought to value it all the more, for I have refused it to several people of high station, as I have not more than six left. What makes me prefer to let him have it is that Dürer twice speaks in it of my ancestor Hans Imhoff, now at rest with God. Gold and silver are dear to everyone, but I consider such a letter of greater value: for there will always be gold in the world, but a writing of Dürer's cannot be found so easily, such as the two Cardinals Spineli and Ursini begged me for. I only say this in order to show what brotherly affection I have for the person to whom I give this letter. Given at Nuremberg, the 3rd July, 1624. Hans Imhoff the elder." This is the third Hans, the youngest son of Wilibald, the celebrated collector; he was born in 1563, and died in 1629. These letters of Dürer are always sealed with his arms, an open double door with an A and a T above, letters which Campe mistook for the upper part of an easel (*Reliquien*, Frontispiece).

* For the original see Appendix, p. 376.

*strane bestiacce io ebbi tanta paura, e parvemi una grande cosa;** but I suspect the Schottites were afraid of you, for you look very savage, especially on fête days, when you go along with that skipping step!" Imagine this, with the councillor's already somewhat corpulent frame! Pirkheimer had just the previous year, at the Diet at Cologne, settled the differences between his native city and the dreaded robber-knight Konz Schott. He was perhaps less fortunate in his love affairs, which were always a source of amusement to Dürer, and furnished him with inexhaustible material for jokes, sometimes of the coarsest description. "But," he continues, "it is very unseemly for such lansquenets to smear themselves with civet. You want, too, to be a regular dandy (*Seidenschwanz*—'silk-tail'), and think if you only please the women, that everything is all right. Now if you were only such a charming fellow as I am, I should not be angry," &c.

Pirkheimer had just been sent to a meeting of the chiefs and councillors of the Swabian League at Donauwerth for the purpose of settling some old differences with the Margrave Frederick of Brandenburg-Bayreuth, Burgrave of Nuremberg. In his letter to Dürer he no doubt boasted greatly of his oratorical gifts, and imparted to him the plan of his diplomatic campaign.† In reply, Durer writes on the 8th September 1506:—

"Most learned, approved, wise, honourable, highly esteemed Herr Wilibald Pirkheimer, master of many languages, courageous detector of falsehood, and quick discerner

* "To the greatest and first man in the world! Your servant, the slave Albert Dürer, salutes his magnificent master, Wilibald Pirkheimer. By my faith, I gladly and with great pleasure received tidings of your health and great honcur. I wonder how it is possible for a man like you to hold out against so many crafty tyrants, swashbucklers, and soldiers—it can only be by the grace of God. When I read in your letter of these strange monsters, I had great fear, and it seemed to me a marvellous thing," &c.

† In Pirkheimer's *Tugendbüchlein*,

of truth! Your humble servant Albert Dürer wishes you health and the great honour you deserve *con diavolo tanto per la ciancia, chi te ne pare! Io vuol dinegare il vostro cuore* [in the devil's name, as much of this nonsense as you like, I wager] that you will think that I too am an orator of 100 *partite!** A chamber† for holding the images of memory must needs have more than four corners. I *vuol* not *impacciare* [bother] my *capo* [head] with it, I will only *recommandare* [advise] you, for I think there are not so *molte* little chambers in the head that you can keep a little bit in each. The margrave will not give you so long an audience. 100 articles and 100 words to each article, will require exactly 9 days 7 hours 52 minutes, without the *sospiri* [breath-takings] which I have not reckoned in. You will therefore not be able to say everything at once; your speech would drag on like an old woman's tale."

But even the real successes of his friend do not put Dürer into a more serious mood, and in his last letter, dated, on "I don't know what day of the month, but about 15th October 1506," he writes as follows:—

"As I know that you are aware of my devotion, there is no need to write to you about it. But it is all the more necessary to tell you of my great pleasure in hearing of the honour and fame that you have gained through your manly wisdom and learned skill, which are all the more to be

published in 1606, Hans Imhoff, his great-grandson, gives some similar details (p. 69), culled probably from Pirkheimer's own notes, about his eloquence: — "He had besides a manly, powerful voice, a splendid and almost incredible memory, so that not only did he often repeat, answer, and confute, rapidly and without hesitation, sixty or more long-winded cases and grievances which were brought against his superiors and employers, the honourable council, but could also, in accordance with his instructions, cite just as many against the other side without his memory ever failing him."

* *I.e.* able to treat of a hundred subjects at once.

† *I.e.* head.

admired as such qualities are seldom, if ever, to be found in so young and small a body. But it comes to you by the grace of God, as it does to me. How delighted we are when we think we have hit on some good thing, I with my art, you *con vostra* wisdom! When people praise us, we stretch out our necks and believe it all. Meantime, perhaps, there is some wicked scoffer laughing at us behind our backs. Therefore don't believe it when they praise you, for you are more utterly unmannerly than you can imagine. I can see you standing quite properly before the margrave, speaking so prettily, and bending low just as you do when you go courting the Rosenthalerin. I am sure that when you wrote your last letter, you were full of some love affair. You ought to be ashamed of yourself, old as you are, and to think yourself so good-looking; why, love-making is as becoming to you as it is to a great shaggy dog to play with a little kitten. If you were as refined and gentle as I am, I could understand it If God permits me to return home, I don't know how I shall be able to live with you, for your great wisdom; but I am rejoiced at your virtue, and kindheartedness, and your dogs will have a better time of it if you do not flog them till they are lame. However, if you are so greatly considered at home, you will never venture to speak to a poor painter in the street, it would be too great a disgrace for you to talk *con poltrone dipentore* [with a good-for-naught of a painter]!"

Dürer, in his turn, betrays the fact that he too was not without vanity. He never neglected to dress in the fashion, and took pleasure in it, for he writes in one letter:—"My French cloak, the mantle, and the brown coat send you their compliments"; and in another it is the same thing of the "Italian coat." He even indulged in silly extravagances:—"You must know that I took it into my head to learn dancing, and have been twice to the dancing

school, and had to give the dancing master a ducat. But nothing on earth would induce me to go there again. I should dance away all my earnings, and be none the wiser in the end." The life in Nuremberg was certainly not so merry and free from care, and every German will understand Dürer's words at the thought of returning home. "Ah, how I shall shiver for want of the sun. Here I am a gentleman, at home a hanger-on."

Unfortunately, Pirkheimer's answers to these admirable effusions of Dürer are wanting, and we thus miss the meaning of many a joke and allusion. Of one letter of his to Dürer, however, we have some slight trace. It belonged to the Imhoffs, whence it passed into the possession of Lord Arundel, and afterwards came with the rest of that nobleman's collection to the Duke of Norfolk. In 1681, a part of the collection was presented by the duke to the Royal Society in London, "where there is still a Latin letter of Pirkheimer's to Dürer." * But though Mr. William Mitchell's researches in the library of the Royal Society led to the discovery of the letter from Dürer already mentioned, they have as yet proved fruitless as regards this letter of Pirkheimer's. The statement, however, as to the existence of this letter, if it is founded on fact, is of a certain importance as showing that Pirkheimer wrote in Latin, which was doubtless easier for the scholar than German. It would also further confirm our supposition that Dürer had some knowledge of this language when he left school.† No doubt his insatiable thirst for knowledge led him to continue the study of it afterwards, enough,

* Heller, *Dürers Werke*, p. 74.

† See above, p. 55. This supposition is in no way opposed to what Camerarius says in his preface to the Latin edition of the Treatise on Proportion, 1532: "Literarum quidem studia non attigerat, sed quæ illis tamen traduntur, maxime naturalium et mathematicarum rerum scientiæ, fere didicerat." Indeed, the latter part of the sentence rather confirms it.

at any rate, for him to be able to read and understand it, if not to write it. That he was not unfamiliar with it is certain from the wording of the letter in which he wanted to give his friend a specimen of his progress in Italian. Amid the motley mixture of dialect and arbitrary phraseology, it may be noticed that Dürer uses many Latin words, such as *homo, mundo, salus, honor;* and that whenever the Italian expression does not occur to him, he immediately substitutes for it the Latin equivalent, as *milites* for *soldati*, *nisi* for *se non.** In any case, we thus obtain a clue which enables us to judge of the degree of culture which Dürer attained to, and which, in the existing state of literature at that time, he could hardly have reached without some knowledge of Latin. Like Leonardo da Vinci, Dürer was a writer and a man of learning amongst artists.

* Compare the original text in Campe's *Reliquien*, 21, and Eye's *Jahrb. für Kunstwissenschaft*, ii. 206, together with my translation in *Dürers Briefe*, p. 13 and notes.

APPENDIX.

P. 369. The following is the original of Durer's letter to Pirkheimer:—

"Venedig, 25. April 1506.

"Meinen willigen dienst zuvor lieber her. Mich wundert, dz Ir mir nit schreibt, wy ewch der saffirring gefall, den ewch der Hans Imhoff geschikt hatt beim Schonpottn von Awgspurg. Ich weis nit, ob er ewch worden ist oder nit. Ich pin peym Hans Imhoff gewest, hab in geforscht; sagt er, er mein nit anderst her sol ewch dan worden sein. Awch ist ein priff dopei, den ich ewch geschriben hab, und ist der sthein in ein versigelte püxle gemacht und hat eben die gross als er hir gezeichnett (*folgt die Zeichnung eines Ringes*) und hab in mit grossen pit zu wegn gepracht, wan er ist lawter und nett, und dy gesellen sagen, er sey fast gut vür dz gelt, dz ich dafür geben. Er wiegt ungefer 5 fl. reinsch und hab dorfür geben 18 dugaten und 4 marzell; und wen er verlorn wurd, so wurd ich halb unsinig. Wan er ist schir 2 moll so vill geschetzt worden, als ich dorfür geben hab. Man wolt mir awch von schtund an gewin geben, da ich in kawft het. Dorum lieber her Pyrkeymer sagt dem Hans Imhoff dz er den pottn forsch, wo er mit dem priff und püxle hin kumen fey, und der pott ist vom jungen Hans Imhoff geschikt worden am elften dag Marzy. Hi mit seind Gott befolhen und last ewch mein mutter befolhen sein; sprecht dz sy mein pruder zu Wolgemut dw, awff dz er erbett und nit erfawll. Alzeitt ewer dyner. Lest nach dem synn, ich hab eilentz itz woll 7 pryff zw schreiben—ein teill geschriben. Mir ist leid vür hern Lorentz, grüsst in und Steffn Paumgartner. Geben zw Fenedig im 1506. jar am sanct Marx dag.

Albrecht Dürer.

Schreibt mir palt wider, wan ich hab dy weill kein rw. Andres Kunhofer ist thottlich krank, itz ist mir pottshaft kum."

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